ujaku seven

autumn two thousand

featuring

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blank tapes
bloody fist records
curse ov dialect
dworzec
minit
martin ng
pimmon
sphagnum nagasaki
what is music?

ujaku seven
autumn two thousand

"australian out-sound"?
"australian underground"?
"experiments in australian music"?
"australian fringe music"?
"australian experimental audio art"?!

I am in need of something to plaster on the cover of this publication, to make it clear what the contents consist of. Any ideas? Please send to ujaku@hotmail.com.

Oh and no smart arses – I've already considered 'wankers anonymous'.

All contents herein by Mark Groves unless otherwise noted. The glorious back cover review comes courtesy of Jon Dale.

Richmond VIC early April 2000. That's beautiful.

Ujaku.7 autumn 2000
124 Hutton Street Thornbury Victoria 3071 Australia
ujaku@hotmail.com

Greetings from the land of the noisy neighbour, Thornbury Victoria. After a summer spent wallowing in beer and rancid hot weather, I've decided to get my shit together and descend into coffee and chocolate instead. On the side, I've managed to produce the wonderful publication you hold in your sweaty, hairy palms. If by chance you picked up the last issue of Ujaku, you may remember I mentioned an impending relocation from dry old Adelaide, South Australia to swingin' cosmopolitan den-of-yuppies Melbourne. Well, I'm pleased to report that I managed to pull it off, meaning I am no longer a resident of the city of churches. The move to Melbourne has been a mixed experience; I've gone through some pretty depressed periods since my arrival, but at the time of writing things aren't too bad. I did end up landing a (reasonable) teaching job; my house is pretty nice (fellow occupants included), and I now have greater access to the things I remain obsessive about: albums, comics, videos, cinema, magazines, and a decent haircut now and then. For cuts, I recommend Shaft at 477 Elizabeth Street: $10 cuts, great service, and your fifth cut half price! On top of all this, no matter how flat I may feel from time to time, I can rest assured that things are always better than they would have been had I remained in Adelaide.

That's about all the space I'll waste on my life outside of Ujaku here. Since my last issue I've read criticisms that I don't put enough of myself into this 'zine, but fuck that – this modest publication is all about my enthusiasm for various bits and pieces of modern day art/culture/music/sound/whatever, not me hanging out my dirty laundry in public. I can't stand most 'zines full of 'personal writings' I come across, so why on earth would I wish to create one of my own? There is also the fact that I believe I give quite a bit of myself in the review section. Those are my opinions, and that's the bit of me I want out there. Getting back to having greater access to the (material) things I love, since coming to Melbourne I've gone print media crazy (at least by my standards). You can probably guess my favourite sources if you live here: Polyester Books on Brunswick Street, and Minotaur Books on Bourke Street. As far as magazines go, I have found a new favourite (even topping *The Wire*): *Life Sucks Die* [www.lifesucksdie.com] [lifesuks@winternet.com]. Straight outta middle America (well, Minneapolis to be precise), this work of art is pretty much aimed squarely at the rather predictable demographic to which I belong, and it hits the target dead centre. Coming from a Hip-Hop base, *Life Sucks Die* manages to spread its tentacles quite a distance; among others, the current issue features interviews with Kool Keith *and* Mr. Bungle, while the last one managed Company Flow *and* Fishbone. So this is not *The Source* we are talking about then. The rest of the mag is stuffed with super stupid rude material to make you giggle: graff shots interspersed with cheap porn and medical deformities, vandalism tips, lots of celebrity bashing, and a review section concerned with albums, magazines, and various other consumer items (rather inexplicable in a number of cases: Ponds facewash? Lady Secret deodorant? Wolfgang Puck's Frozen Pizza?!?!)

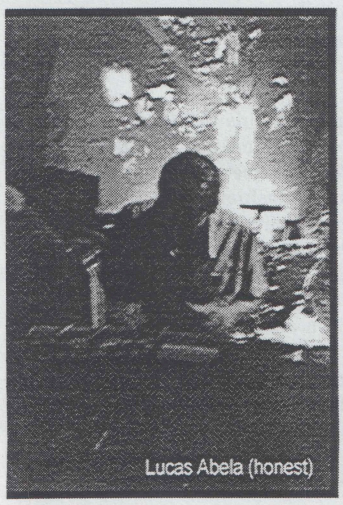
After *Life Sucks Die*, everything else is a few steps down – but there are a number of other notables floating around at the moment. The best has gotta be Jon Dale's *Astronauts* 'zine [PO Box 319 Torrensville Plaza SA 5031][jwdale@smug.adelaide.edu.au], which features some of the greatest reviews and interviews of recent memory. Interviewed in the last issue of Ujaku, Jon is a very opinionated chap, and his writing is of the kind of standard that I aspire to. Look just buy the fucking thing from Synaesthesia, it has the best Sonic Youth interview ever in it, and it is extremely likely it will get your stupid indie rock loving arse interested in something new. Running a close third behind *Astronauts* is *Cock & Balls Zine* [PO Box 7081 West Lakes 5021 SA], although there is absolutely no common ground between the two. This miniature bible features priceless explorations of the kind of humour I will never, ever tire of. The Cock & Balls motif should really be at the centre of the Australian flag – it makes sense and you bloody well know it. On top of the variations on the central theme, the issue I was sent included a feature on how to score chicks at The Big Day Out, so you know you have to get it, because you own Nine Inch Nails records and lust after young girls in Kurt Cobain memorial tittie-tops. Also providing entertainment is *No Frills* [PO Box R 420 Royal Exchange 1225 NSW][sevenuy@hotmail.com], primarily because it also features an interview with Mark N of Bloody Fist in which he makes statements that made my glass of Milo spurt out my nostrils. Most of the other print material I've picked up has been rather glossy and without need of approval from the likes of yours truly, so I won't go on about them other than to mention the best of the bunch: *Motorbooty* (the 'White Rapper Trading Cards' issue is so necessary), *Exile Osaka* (a perennial favourite), *Mean*, *Juxtapoz* (when the art scene shit is kept to a minimum), *Fright X*, and *FAQT*.

What Is Music? 2000: For four nights in a row this February, I went to the same club on Chapel Street. Those of you familiar with Melbourne will probably know what a journey to Chapel Street usually entails: lots of people who seem to have stepped out of fashion magazines, and a feeling of being out of one's depth, or in the presence of a master race. Revolver, the venue in question, is usually a late night version of Chapel Street during the day. I wouldn't normally consider going to a place like this four nights in a row (one night is normally more than enough) but in this case I decided to make an exception and attend this years What Is Music? Festival. Throughout the course of the four evenings I witnessed many performances that changed the way I view things, while also being subjected to many things I found very distasteful, although this was not usually the performances themselves. So what were the negatives? (To get them out of the way early) Well, Revolver regulars are not people I really wish to be around on a regular basis, even if this

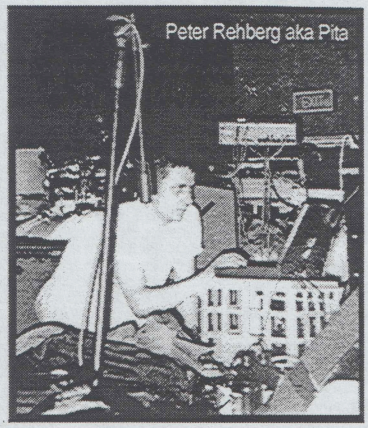
Greg Kingston & Jon Rose

does make me a snob (the exact opposite being the truth though, I feel excluded *by them*). There is also a bit of a clique happening with these avant garde types, so on occasions there was an exclusionary 'scene' evident – these people should know better – any kind of 'scene' will lead to bad things. Use your manners at all times and never, ever cop an attitude, or else I'll tie you up, chuck you in the boot of my car and drive you to Elizabeth, South Australia where your highbrow arse will learn about the real world. Oh and the main room was stinking hot, so I was sweating like a pig much of the time. None of this really ruined the festival for me though – hell, I had a great time!

For those of you unaware of the What Is Music? Festival, it is an annual event spearheaded by Sydney residents Oren Ambarchi and Robbie Avenaim, themselves very active participants in the festival program. As the name indicates, a usually disparate group of artists are tapped for the shows, with little common thread other than a will to experiment. Most performances really do pose the question 'what is music?' For example, undisputed genius Neil Hamburger was on the bill this year, and I am interested in hearing someone's idea of how what he does constitutes music. Although I believe a review of all performances would (perhaps) be a pointless exercise (live shows usually being a case of either being there or not), it's worth noting what the standouts were, as you may want to look into them yourself if you see them playing around town. I guess that could be a problem in some cases though, as the folk from Austrian label Mego will not be playing around here again any time soon. At least from my perspective, it was the likes of Fennesz, Pita and Skot from Mego who provided the revelatory stuff of the festival. I've been listening to Mego's recorded output for a couple of years now, and it was quite an experience to witness this stuff for real through a huge PA. Although very minimal visually in almost every instance (the Skot 'video band' performance being the exception) the atmosphere generated was very different to what I am used to, and presented a lot of questions. I found myself looking at the performers most of the time (usually one or two people intently concentrating on their laptops), but this felt a little odd. I grew up going to see bands, not going to clubs, so after years of just watching it suddenly seemed a little inappropriate; they weren't really doing much (no laptop equivalents of the Heavy Metal guitar solo) so I drifted into other things while maintaining an awareness of the sound. Hanging at the bar, talking to friends, watching the projections – these all seemed like much more suitable activities than intently watching while sitting uncomfortably on the floor trying not to spill my drink (which I ended up doing quite a bit). I know that it is probably a good thing these performers are throwing up lots of questions and issues, but I must admit that a simple equation still rings true for me: no rhythm to move to? Then supply me with a visual spectacle to justify my full attention. Sometimes it all clicked perfectly though; Pita's set in particular was absolutely affecting, with the voluminous sound making the emotion of his recent *Get Out* album dig in very deep. It didn't seem to matter that I was spending my time mostly watching the floor or the other members of the audience. Christian Fennesz, with his sound washing over the room in a beautifully brutal way achieved similar levels of beauty, and I really did enjoy the Skot performance, although it was an altogether more aggressive proposition – Mathias gritted his teeth seconds before ultra harsh white noise obliterated some found dialogue about suppositories. The Sigma Editions collective explored somewhat similar sonic terrain during their all too brief Wednesday night performance, and were also capable of creating a resonant, deep sound. Although using more low-tech apparatus than the Europeans (generally speaking), the same questions about the lack of visual activity were thrown up – was this to be the theme for this year's festival?


Lucas Abela (honest)

No question of where to direct attention during my other favourite of the festival, Sydney's Testicle Candy versus Melbourne's Curse Ov Dialect. Members from both groups are interviewed in this issue, so I won't go into the background of the collaboration (as the Curse boys do elsewhere), other than to mention that the performance I saw in Melbourne followed the one featuring serial pest Peter Horre that made it onto *Today Tonight*. This one was perhaps slightly more sedate, but there were still a few key moments: the pre-set screening of the *Today Tonight* report, the wall of feedback that followed, the stumbling MCs all going hell for leather at the same time, and Lucas Abela hurling himself into the crowd, climbing the walls of the venue then returning to the stage to destroy records using the Peeled Hearts Paste device. A few bits of shattered vinyl flew in my direction at a very high speed, waking me up after a somewhat long evening. As for the rest of the Australian contingent present, the performers I was most impressed with are the ones I actually chased up for interviews. Martin Ng with Jim Denley on the Wednesday was fucking hilarious and very live action, including a beautiful moment when Jim unloaded a heap of saliva from his wind instrument while Martin continued cutting at his vinyl with considerable belligerence. Pimmon appeared in a couple of settings (a duo with Oren Ambarchi, and a large improv ensemble), although I must admit I would have liked to see him perform solo. Maybe sometime in the future. If it's on next year, I'm going.


Peter Rehberg aka Pita

Cheers Matthew Smith, Mark Harwood@Synaesthesia, Jon Dale, Lucas Abela, Rob (Chicken-man) Mayson, Bek Duke@Missing Link, Oren Ambarchi@Redeye, Nigel Koop, Paul Gough, David@Pulp & Pigment, Evan Smith, Phil Todd@Betley Welcomes Careful Drivers, Martin Ng, Paul Wild @Fisheye, Adam Gauci (Raceless), Daryl Rabel (Merciful Creed the Righteous), Mark Newlands, Andrew Kettle, Axel, Arek Gulbenkoglu, Torben Tilly, Jasmine Guffond, Josh Petherick, Iain McIntyre, Lars Holmgren, Tim Welfare, coffee.

Not another peep out of you! Indie hierarchy, 'new breed' metal, hardcore fans, scene (and 'zine) Mafia, uni students, (cock) rock revivalists, new wave revivalists, crawling up your own arse electronic musicians, Brunswick Street fake crusties living in homes with perfectly good bathrooms, 'mellow' live shows (what's the fucking point?), tough guys (of both sexes), virtuosos of whatever persuasion (improvisers included). Shutup!

Right now I enjoy: ▸ Atari Teenage Riot/Asian Dub Foundation split 7" ⏭ Fat Cat Split Series 1-8 CD ⏭ Primal Scream - Exterminator CD ⏭ Stone Roses S/T CD ⏭ Cristoph De Babalon/Kid 606 split 12" ⏭ V/A Collision Course CD ⏭ Divine Styler – Wordpower2: Directrix CD ⏭ The Best of Motorhead: All The Aces CD ⏭ V/A NCL Trax 2CD ⏭ Slayer- Seasons In The Abyss CD ⏭ V/A Pirate Fuckin' Radio 100 CD ⏭ Pita – Get Out CD ⏭ Nation Of Ulysses – Plays Pretty For Baby CD/13 Point Program To Destroy America CD ■

Ujaku.7 autumn 2000 124 Hutton Street Thornbury Victoria Australia 3071 ujaku@hotmail.com
Pronunciation: *'oo – jar – kooh'*. I may not be correct, but that's what I'm going with. This 'zine exists for a couple of very vague reasons. First of all, I have an interest in various wide-ranging aspects of (modern) music and art, and feel the need to find out more about the people behind the creations I encounter (and not just the artists themselves), for a range of reasons I shouldn't need to go into. I also have an interest in introducing these creations to other people (obviously), which is why my communication with these artists and enthusiasts, usually conducted via email, is presented here for your enjoyment. In actuality I don't always adhere to these guidelines (interviews have been conducted in the past simply because I thought the subjects would provide interesting responses), but it remains my starting point in most cases. In addition, I have restricted myself to purely Australian interview subjects, but this is for no reason other than the fact I am aware of overseas publications that already deal with the art I am into. In fact, I am now aware there are a few Australian publications that deal with similar areas to Ujaku as well, but I don't really want to think about that. Of course, my reviews are by no means restricted to purely Australian content, as they are about *my* feelings and thoughts about the releases featured. Any other material included is here because I find it entertaining, and I reckon others would get a kick out of it too. So there you have it, the most pissweak statement of intent ever. With regards to promo material, feel free to send stuff to Ujaku, but I cannot guarantee it will be featured in the 'zine. The content of this publication deals only with material I am enthusiastic about, so if it doesn't light my fire, it doesn't get in. If anyone is deranged enough to want to actually advertise in my next issue, I guess you should contact me and we'll come to an agreement that will involve you handing me large wads of cash. I'm joking; ads are free, so send whatever you want and I'll probably include it if I don't lose it. As mentioned, all of the stuff featured in the review section is gold to me, as I cannot be bothered writing about something I do not like.

If you live in Australia, you probably have some preconceived ideas about Adelaide. To be frank, the city doesn't really have a great reputation outside of South Australia; in fact the common perception seems to be of a backwoods town best described as 'out of touch'. To an extent, this is a fair assessment. It is a town dominated for many years by a steady stream of cover bands, now seemingly fascinated by moronic 'hardcore' or 'punk' (those terms are being used very loosely here) shenanigans deployed by rich white boys desperate to beat people up and/or get laid. But there are exceptions to this, little pockets of activity that manage to escape the mire. Nigel Koop's Blank Tapes label is in the process of documenting one of these pockets, and is doing a pretty good job of it. He is also involved in various musical projects of his own, the most prominent being the wonderful Home For The Def. Here's a few words exchanged with Mr. Koop earlier this year regarding Blank Tapes, HFTD, Adelaide, and Cock and Balls.

Can you tell me about the time following the breakup of Brian Apples, leading to the formation of Home For The Def and the Blank Tapes label. Did this all happen in succession?

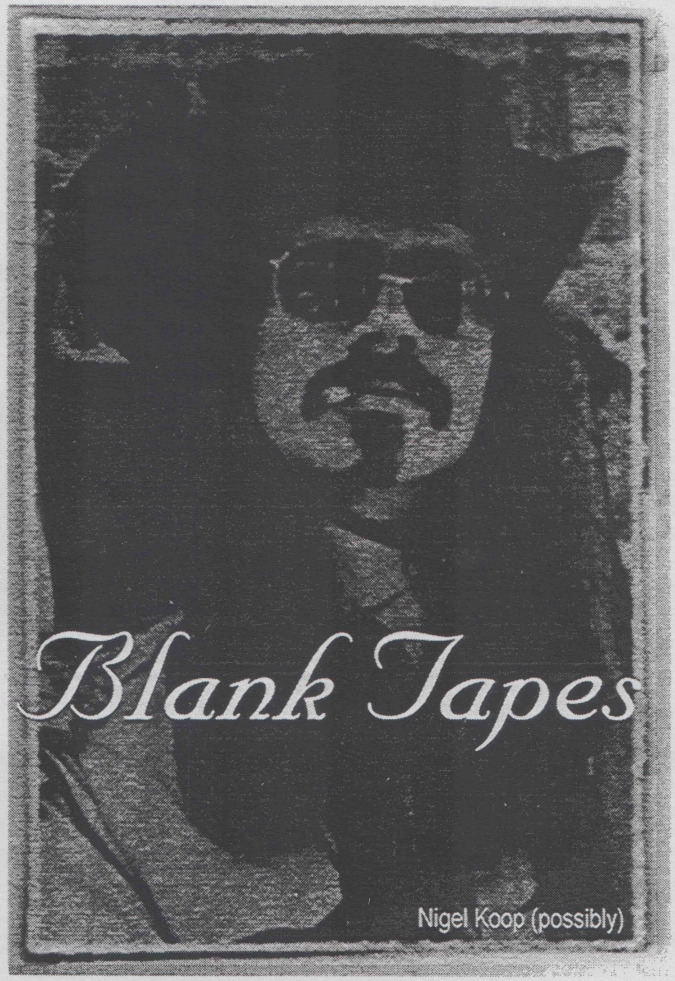
Well there wasn't actually a gap there, because Home For The Def had been going several years before Brian Apples started. Brian Apples came about after Josh (the other member of Brian Apples) heard a Home For The Def tape via a mutual friend. So there wasn't really as much a case of things happening in succession with those two bands as much as at the same time. The Blank Tapes label had it's foundings during the time of Brian Apples.
It wasn't actually Blank Tapes, but what was really the seed for it. I put out a couple issues of a zine called *Attractive Zine* each of which came with a 60 min. home-recordings compilation tape of Adelaide stuff. It wasn't widely distributed (and the first zine sucked), and energies for it waned. Several years past and then I was kicking round the idea of starting up a tape label with a friend, Jon, and he gave me a hand setting up what is now known as Blank Tapes. It started more or less by collecting stuff together for the first sampler and launching that quietly at the Winterfest show. Seeing that it was only $5 it sold really well, and 3D Radio have been really supportive, so it's been going great, much better than I expected.
Being in Brian Apples was definitely a big step on the way to Blank Tapes happening because it was then I realised that there was quite a bit of home-recording going on as previously I was just doing stuff in my bedroom and didn't really have any great frame of reference for it all. I remember hearing a Ween interview on Triple J and was blown away to hear that someone else had done the two tape decks recording technique and that there was a thing called 'lo-fi'. I thought I invented it. It was kind of reassuring to find out that other dorks were out there doing the same thing.

Has the content for Blank Tapes releases come from Adelaide residents exclusively so far? Do you intend to remain focussed primarily (exclusively?) on Adelaide?

Not exclusively, but 98% Adelaide stuff so far, which is changing slightly as the label slowly leaks out into other states, but I don't think it will ever change too much from being an Adelaide based and focussed label. At the moment, Blank Tapes has released cdrs from O.P.G. (Tribal Thunder, ex-King Loser, 's band) and also Wagons (a great country/noise band), both from Melbourne.

Would you agree that a lot of the people releasing material on the label retain a strong sense of anonymity? (For example, a lot of the artists featured on the sampler CDs are not listed under their real names). Is this a conscious decision on their part, or a result of the fact that much of the material comes from a group of friends who know each other (and therefore know one another's aliases)? Is there a risk of things becoming too much of an in-joke?

There's definitely a sense of anonymity behind a lot of the releases, but I don't think it's as much a case of it having to be anonymous rather than people just giving the project it's own name. Part of it also comes from the fact that a lot of it is coming from different combinations of similar people and so I would rather that bands be known only by their name rather than their members. Kinda like when you call a Banana Cake a Banana Cake and not a combination of bananas, sugar, egg, flour, etc. The bands have a seperate identity to their individual members.
I can only hope that any humour there is open to others and not an in-joke because that kind of thing is usually pretty lame. I don't have that great desire to make things inaccessible to others that so many people seem to have. I think that says more about inferiority



complexes in the creator than anything about the listener. Blank Tapes aims to welcome all with open arms.

I'm really interested in the processes you use for the construction of the HFTD recordings. Can you describe how tracks are constructed?

Basically songs are written on either the guitar and/or using rhythm stuff created on the computer and then all assembled in the 4 track. Not quite sure how I can answer this one further without referring to specific tracks, which I'm quite happy to do.

Yeah I guess what I'm interested in is the apparent difference between the skewed Hip-Hop influenced stuff I've been hearing of late ('Victimless Crime', and large chunks of the new *Phat Phlex* cassette) and the earlier guitar based stuff. Is there a difference in the process depending on the direction of the track? I am also very interested in the 'Passes Wind' cassette (made entirely of fart sounds) - how the hell did you put that together, and where did the idea come from in the first place? Had you been regularly recording your gas for posterity?

A big part of the difference between the hip-hop stuff and the guitar stuff (which is still happening) is that it often takes a little bit more work to organise the hip-hop stuff. There's definitely a change of process as most usually, the guitar stuff is a little bit more immediate recording wise. I can sit down with a guitar and a casio drum beat and record something much easier than sussing out a whole lot of loops and samples. I've got lots of loops just sitting around on my computer, and it just takes the motivation to put them together, which I find much harder than sitting in my room with the guitar. 'Phat Phlex' ended up heavier on the hip-hop/loop/beats side of things because I went through a heavy phase of inspiration with the computer.
'Passes Wind' was something that came about after purchasing my recording walkman, recording all sorts of things on the street, sounds, atmospheres, etc., and, as heard on 'Passes Wind', - farts. I think I might have a pretty bad digestive system, it's kind of delicate and sometimes, like the rest of the world, I get bouts of farting. I just noticed upon listening to one of my recording walkman tapes that there was a fair bit of wind-passing on there

and thought 'That would make a stupid tape' and so started 'collecting' them for this purpose. Little did I realise how long it would take just to fill a 10 minute tape. The average fart is quite short (although there is a 6 or 7 second long one on there!) and so the process of making this tape was quite long. The tape makes me laugh when I listen to it, I know other people have expressed nauseous feelings.

Looking through the Blank Tapes catalogue, it seems that HFTD has gone though some rather odd obsessive periods, centring previously around The Cure and Australia's own Johnny O'Keefe. Is there currently an artist dictating your direction?

I guess to me they don't seem too odd because I think both of The Cure and Johnny O'Keefe have released some amazing music. Both of them struck me as having songs interesting enough to disassemble and try and put together in my own way which was great fun and taught me a lot about songwriting. I think it's sad that the cover song gets such a bad rap because done well they can be just as exciting as anything original. I mean, even if someone couldn't write an original song to save their life but could do amazing cover versions of songs, they would still be a great artist in my eyes. Home For The Def definitely goes through some obsessive periods though, not always centred on musicians-I've also released a double cassette album based around public transport and the 'Poems For Passengers' series which was a series of really bad poetry that's on Adelaide's buses and trains, allegedly for the entertainment of the passengers. Currently I'm just starting my third Cure covers album, "Restraining Order", and am also thinking longingly of having the time to do a few other tribute albums such as ones to Buddy Holly, Belinda Carlisle, Roger Miller, Gene Pitney and Charles Bronson.

Oohh, Charles Bronson! Covers of the theme music to his films? Or do you have other ideas?

No, songs inspired by his movies. I've been having a Bronsonathon lately watching all his movies and thought I'd give that a go. I'm just about to start writing lyrics from my notes, which I'm thinking will be pretty hard because alot of the movies are very similar. He really got typecast in his Death Wish role. There hasn't been much great music in his films that I've noticed so far, except for the early Death Wish films (Herbie Hancock does some real funky stuff on the first one, and Jimmy Page does great work on the second and third one).

Can you explain the relationship between the HFTD 'Big Band' and your solo material - why do both exist, and how do you decide which incarnation will perform live?

Basically the Big Band came about when I was asked to do a Home For The Def show at a local pub back in 1996 or 97 and as I wasn't that happy with playing solo at the time, I decided to put together a band to play the songs. This was Jon Dale on drums, my brother Simon on guitar and myself on guitar and vocals. We played sporadically and recorded the tape "The Tragedy Of Genius". Last year we added Ringo Stalin on bass, and then early 2000 Jon departed. So now the Big Band is myself, Simon and Ringo and has a completely new feel which I would like to get recorded. Nowadays I feel much more comfortable playing live by myself though and so I only play with the Big Band pretty infrequently because it's much easier to organise things when you're doing everything yourself. I prefer to work as a one man army.

I actually witnessed a lot of the key performances from your former outfit Brian Apples (which should really be documented somewhere) - has there been any memorable performances of late from HFTD or the other Blank Tapes artists?

Yeah, Brian Apples definitely had a number of key performances (such as the Tivoli gig were we were inappropriately booked inbetween a whole lot of big metal bands and pissed off more than one or two of the metalheads in attendance that night), which have been documented in part on the two Brian Apples tapes. There's also a lot of video of shows and a rockumentary called "Brian Apples: Shattered Dreams" which were done by Kath Dooley of Fiona Beverage, which I'd like to collect together on a video one day.

As far as other memorable performances, the greatest lately would have to be the Blank Tapes CD Sampler #2 Launch Gig where Home For The Def, Rhizome, Bubonic SoundSystem, Mr. Jonathon Crouch, Bucket, Chong DMC and superscience played. That was brilliant and all the bands were amazing.

The Chong DMC stuff always stands out on the Sampler CDs - what does/did their live performance consist of?

They've just started really getting their shit together as far as being a working band, the first Chong DMC cd was put together sporadically over at least two years, and they played their first live gig at the Sampler Launch. So they're really just seeing what they can do live at the moment, and I've been told that the next cd is going to be a bit more of a band thing with some scratching on it. Live they play as a four-piece with someone on tapes, two people on vocals and a live DJ - they keep it pretty interesting, doing a little more than just playing the songs, there was a rave section with 'e's' thrown out last time.

What does the near future hold for Blank Tapes and Home For The Def? Any upcoming releases you can tell me about?

Well Home For The Def is currently in the process of working out a split 7" with Adelaide band The Moonies which is going to be released by Hip To Hate, as well as working on several other tapes, and a soon-to-be-released remixes and alternate versions cdr called "Stop Me If You Think You've Heard This One Before". Blank Tapes is just doing it's thing - I hope to have another Sampler put together sometime mid-late 2000. There's also the Blank Tapes Kylie/Madonna split covers tape which will hopefully come out this year (anyone who wants to do a cover of either/both Kylie and Madonna, feel free to submit something for the tape!) I'm also doing the first in what will hopefully be a series of shows called Dead Man's Pants in April, which is a night with only two rules for all the performers: (a) noone can perform any songs that they have written themselves; and (b) everyone must do a version of What A Wonderful World somewhere in their set. The April show will be Home For The Def, Baterz and Wagons. Hopefully it will capture people's attentions and we can feel proud next time someone says that Adelaide is the home of the cover song.

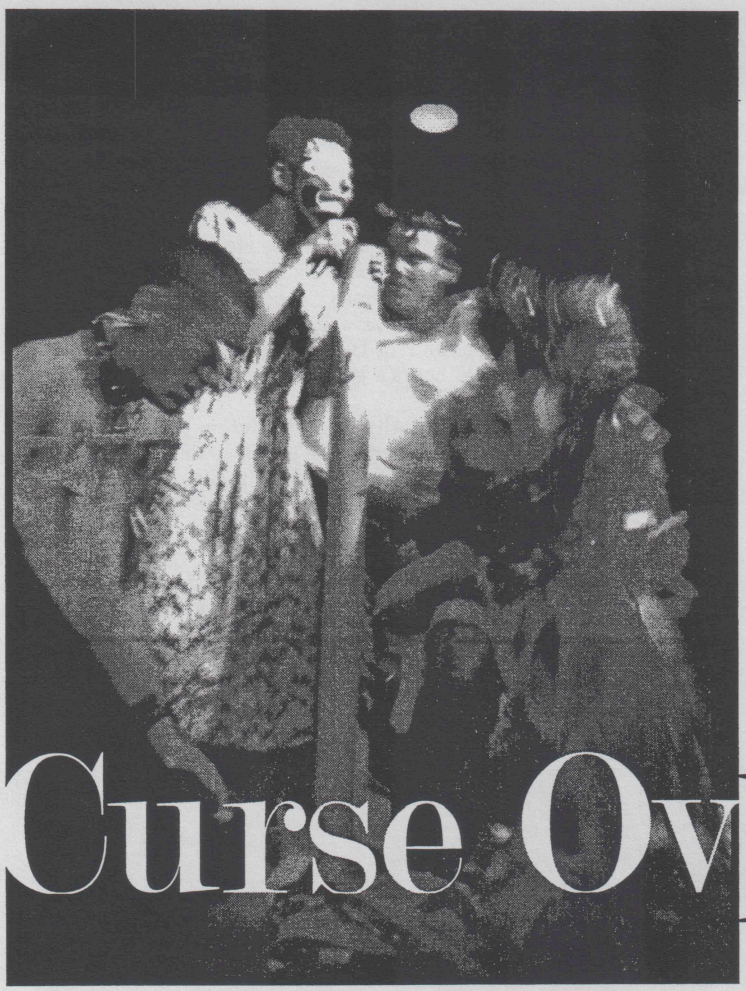
Hell yeah, that's a great idea! I was kind of sad that most of the cover/tribute bands that dominated the live scene here in Adelaide for so many years fell by the wayside in favour of terrible young groups playing poorly constructed originals - I want a return of the likes of *Appetite For Destruction: The Australian Guns N' Roses Show*! Ever seen any great tribute bands around Adelaide yourself?

No, I'm yet to check that scene out properly, I really should get down to Cartoons one of these nights. I got asked whether I was the singer in the Australian Doors Show once though. I'm always depressed that I missed Primary, the Cure tribute band. I'd like to see a Nirvana tribute band, to see whether the singer invests in the whole lifestyle as well. I must say I think tribute bands can be great, I've read some interviews where they sound like they put a lot of work into their show to give it authenticity which is cool, I mean, you can't see Nirvana anymore - what real difference is it seeing the tribute band? Bon 'n' All? Maybe you think AC/DC's gone down the shitter and wish you could see an early AC/DC show.

Who is behind *Cock and Balls*' zine? I must know! It's the best thing I've seen so far this year I think...

Two friends, Rickee Galvatron and Jimi Emmanuel, who seem to have taken it upon themselves to try and free the cock and balls graffiti motif from it's prison of primary and high school and make it free for all of society to use, no matter what their age/sex/religion. They're men with a mission.

rock on like a soldier,
nige/■



Curse Ov Dialect

It's kind of funny. I expected to move to Melbourne and instantly encounter a wealth of interesting performances going on around town at all times. While I have seen quite a few shows from local groups that I have found really affecting and powerful (Dworzec comes to mind), I'm yet to see much that really tries to grab the audience by the throat. In fact the only group that has really jumped out at me (literally) has been Curse Ov Dialect, a bunch of misfits bred by (and later *rejected by*) the Hip-Hop community. They are quite a sight to behold live, generating levels of chaos I had yet to witness first hand until early this year. I tried to track the guys down for the traditional ujaku e-mail exchange, but this proved difficult – so my first 'face to face' interview was conducted with Adam and Daryl from the group in my bedroom in early March. There's quite a bit of rambling here, but no matter – it's all pretty entertaining.

What Happened, and What is Happening

Initial question centres on some tracks from Curse Ov Dialect's first album, *Hex of Intellect*, that I had downloaded a few weeks prior to this interview.

Ujaku: What I was thinking, when I heard those tracks, they sounded very different to the group that I'd seen play at The Empress.
Adam: We've morphed...
Ujaku: Yeah it was just so different –
Adam: There's different members in it and everything.
Ujaku: Okay. You were in that first lineup?
Adam: Me and the DJ Shehab were the only two who are still in the group... there was this other guy, Malis, who left the band... are we recording already?
Ujaku: Yeah...
Adam: Cool. Malis left the band, he was getting married. He's this Papua New Guinean/Croatian guy... Daryl and Earl are the two new members, known as Merciful Creed the Righteous and Topples Atarungi. Raceless (Adam) and Pesobionic (Shehab) are the old members...
Daryl: Basically one left, two came.
Ujaku: Okay. I thought that even though the DJ had remained the same the musical side of things had changed from those older tracks... was there a conscious decision made to change?
Adam: No, we just kept progressing, because we wanted to sample... I kept wanting to sample weirder and weirder stuff. Let's make Hip-Hop tracks with Baroque... let's get traditional Hip-Hop happening with Baroque... let's mix, you know, people jerking off... mix Gerogerigegege!
Daryl: Also, when Malis left as well, you know, he was very –
Adam: He's the more Hip-Hop, "Yo, what's up" –
Daryl: Very straight edge rapper, and that sort of confined what our intentions were. So when he left –
Adam: We had to reform.
Daryl: We had to reform, but we were all perhaps more open-minded...
Adam: Also, Merciful Creed's style is more like poetry, mine's still the old rapping and Earl has started just screaming... now he's developed it into sort of a...
Daryl: Rhythm... scream...
Adam: But it's still Hip-Hop, it's just a different style.
Ujaku: That strikes me as being an important thing that you're saying there, that you still consider it Hip-Hop...
Adam: Ah, now this is where we're differing...
Daryl: Okay, here's the thing – I don't think it is... I think it is and it isn't.
Adam: But the roots are.
Daryl: The roots are definitely Hip-Hop.
Adam: You can't categorize...
Daryl: A caterpillar and a butterfly, they're the same thing right?
Ujaku: Yeah...
Daryl: Then it morphs. Hip-Hop is the caterpillar; we're the butterfly.

The Sampling Game

Adam: It's the groundwork. The Curse Ov Dialect became something else because... I thought with Hip-Hop, the beats and the cuts and the rhymes were the groundwork – but why sample fuckin' jazz, why can't you sample avant-garde classical? Why can't you sample absolutely anything, and mix together Iranian music with twentieth century classical? Why can't you really morph it, and make it Hip-Hop in a sense still, but do something totally new to it? And also be socially conscious... our stuff, it is either very political or very warped, there's two sides to the coin.
Daryl: I usually go by sound, not saying, "okay, I want to sample this form of music"... just what sounds good. Personally I prefer to sample... there are three different types of sample for me, you've got field recordings, it might be me banging on metal, or whatever. Second is experimental music, but of course not whole chunks of it just tiny little sounds, and you play with it... and third would be just global music.
Adam: World music. That's his element in his production. In my production... every core member of the group has their own style of production, and it comes out differently. Myself, I'll sample like Psychedelic Brazilian Music, Mutantes or something, or experimental stuff from wherever... and even like Kamahl or whatever, you know. Whatever goes, whatever doesn't go, whatever goes.
Ujaku: I'd actually assumed that your DJ was the one making all the music –
Adam: It's all of us.
Daryl: We all have input.
Ujaku: So what sort of equipment or software are you using to make your samples?
Adam: We've got the Fruityloops program on the PC. We used to go to studios, like we used to pool together our dole money a few years ago... like I haven't worked much, we used to just like pay an engineer, like we knew what we wanted it to sound like, we'd just get them to materialize it on the computer. Now Shehab, our DJ has learned to utilize Fruityloops in his own way.
Daryl: Soundforge as well. A combination of the two.
Ujaku: Yeah I've got Soundforge on this computer, it's a good program.
Adam: It is, yeah.
Ujaku: but I guess it's pretty low end compared to the stuff a lot of electronic producers are using nowadays...

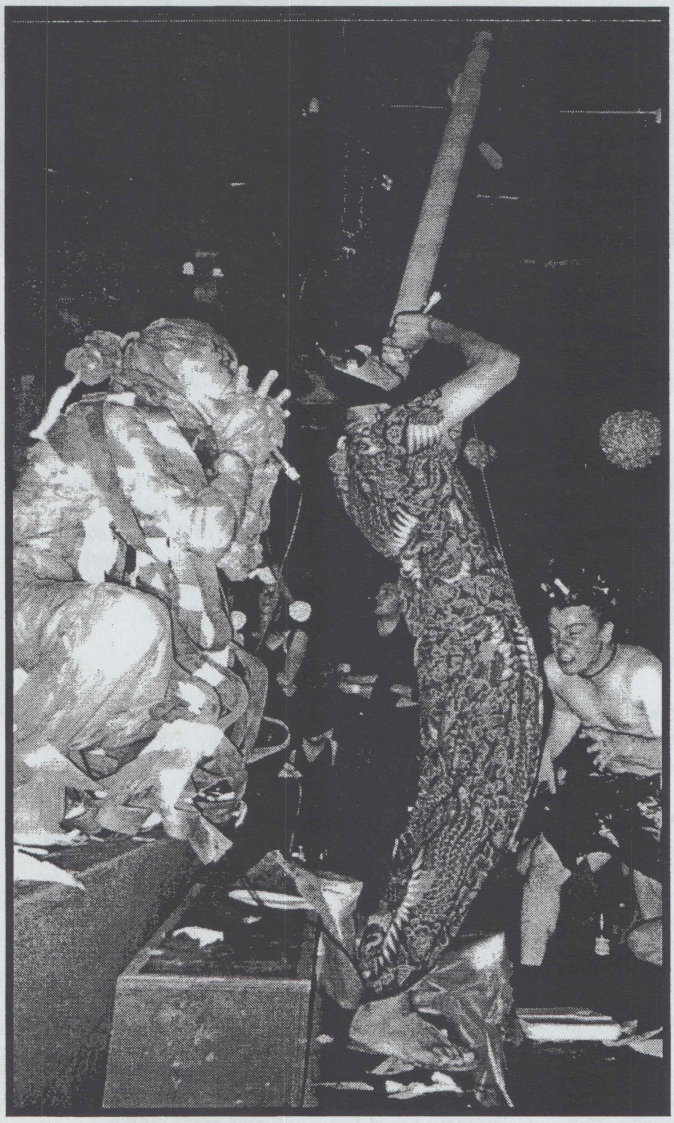
Adam: When we worked with Ollie Olsen, 'cos we've just finished recording a four track thing with him... it's different to our other stuff, it's more like guitar, psychedelic rock -
Daryl: I don't think it's so much guitars. Our previous material sounded sample-based, so what Ollie tried to do was like incorporate a live element, like live drums, or bass, and livened it up. Sample music and live music are two different things.
Adam: ...and he mixed it together.
Ujaku: Was that his suggestion?
Adam: Well, the story was that we started out making our stuff using just samples, we sampled from the Once Upon A Time In China theme music, and like King Crimson, and what else... Pierre Schaeffer, musique concrete stuff. We mixed it together and made a Hip-Hop track out of it but his computer was on the blink and it fucked up, and the DATs fucked up. So we got what was left and added guitars on to what was there already.
Daryl: But it was bass guitar, it wasn't like, lead guitar or anything.
Adam: Sometimes. Some of the tracks it was.
Daryl: Really?
Adam: Yeah and Shehab did the scratching over the top of that.
Ujaku: Did you have to go up to Sydney to work with Ollie?
Adam: No, he was in Melbourne –
Ujaku: Oh OK – I thought Psy-harmonics was Sydney based.
Adam: Nah... Psy-harmonics got screwed, too.
Ujaku: Oh, so he's doing something else now?
Adam: It's still Psy-harmonics, but it's on a low budget now. They had this deal with Festival, and we were going to come out through that, but now he can't afford to bring us out, so we've got to hunt for another deal.
Ujaku: OK, so you all are looking for a label right now?
Adam: Yeah.

Some More Stuff That Happened

Ujaku: One thing that occurred to me when looking at the flyer for the What Is Music? Festival this year, it made specific mention of you guys being rejected or ostracized by the Hip-Hop community. Do you agree with that?
Daryl: I agree with that.
Adam: I agree with that because when I get up on PBS, I used to rap on PBS [local community run FM station], and always do freestyles sort of straight and they accepted me. But when we started jumping up on stage throwing watermelons at people, showing my cock and shit... and doing other things, which "aren't normal Hip-Hop", they were like "Yo you ain't real!" When I was young I used to hang out with African kids on the corner at McDonalds being a homie, and rap at R&B clubs - I morphed from that into experimental music, so my background is very varied. If we came out with like standard Hip-Hop stuff now they would probably still look at us like "Yeah, OK", but we took Hip-Hop to the extreme where they don't know what to call it anymore, it's too fast for them.
Daryl: and then when Earl and myself joined, we were like influenced by Hip-Hop, but our personal manifestation was something beyond Hip-Hop... beyond anything.
Adam: Yeah I don't know, when Harry Partch got into my brain, and then it was all over. But it's still structured; it's still structured Hip-Hop, with those influences.
Ujaku: Do you think that may say something about the people who are involved in the Hip-Hop scene in Australia, how they are narrow minded (musically!) to an extent?
Daryl: They are, because they have this term, 'keeping it real', and what 'real' means is boring and stagnant.
Adam: There's two sorts of Australian Hip-Hop out there today. There's the ones that try to be American, and there's the ones that are ockers, and try to be Aussie, like "How's it goin' mate?"
Ujaku: and it sounds fuckin' terrible!
Adam: some of it's OK...
Daryl: Some of it sounds good, but in a novel way... not something you would take seriously.
Adam: it's like a fuckin' Col Elliot record. For what it is, it's cool, but we don't fit into any of those categories, at all. We're the third party, and there is no party!

Australian Means What?

Ujaku: Do you think that you have any peers here in Australia?
Adam: We've been compared to The Avalanches.
Ujaku: Yeah, OK that's interesting.
Adam: but the thing is like we take it further than they do with the sampling, it's not the same. They've still got a certain style - our style, every song varies... and I think they're more like not into Hip-Hop.
Me, I don't know about Daryl but me, personally, I still like the term 'Hip-Hop', because it's my root, and it's still black music. But it's appropriated in Australia, for one, and then it's appropriated by us another way.
Ujaku: Yeah that makes sense.
Daryl: I don't want to confine our style to Hip-Hop, I want to create something new. We'll have our own section in the music shop. Then maybe you'll have the category, and the category is Curse. That's my ideal.
Adam: ...and also multiculturally as well, the members of the group are all from different cultures, so we want to represent like cultural diversity mixed with musical diversity.
Daryl: and subcultural diversity as well.
Adam: yeah get like a gothic Hip-Hop style going, man!
Ujaku: ha! Do you think there's a 'gothic' element in what you're doing at the moment?
Adam: Oh, I don't know. But why not make Gothic Reggae, why not mix Cajun music with Harry Partch? What's stopping you? But still in that Hip-Hop format, not instrumental 'Trip-Hop'... but it's still a category...
Daryl: It's a blueprint.
Adam: It's a blueprint, we just broke down the barrier, like we said.
Daryl: I don't think we try and be anything, we just be ourselves. Do what we feel is right, just go with it, and whatever happens to be, lives. If you try to compare it to something –
Adam: The live shows are different to the recording, too. The live shows are just... we just materialize into animals.



Live! On TV!

Ujaku: yeah, so bearing in mind that those old recordings I heard were much different to the live show, do the recordings you've just done bear a much closer resemblance to the live show?
Adam: uh, still no.
Daryl: Elements, yes. I think you can tell, because they are more free.

Adam: You have to listen to it to understand. I'll bring it over for you next time. When are you writing this article?
Ujaku: As soon as possible.
Adam: I'll give you a demo in a few days. Then you can understand.
Ujaku: OK. I wanted to ask you about the performance I saw with Testicle Candy –
Daryl: Was that Melbourne or Sydney?
Ujaku: Melbourne. But you guys did perform in Sydney?
Adam: Sydney at What Is Music? at The Big Day Out.
Ujaku: Oh, yeah! And I also wanted to ask you about 'The Serial Pest'.
Adam: Yeah, that was fuckin' bugged out.
Ujaku: So far as the actual performances with Testicle Candy, did they just approach you and say, you know, we'd really like to –
Adam: Well, they're renowned in Sydney as being the most extreme, and in Melbourne we're probably close to that too. So a combination would just be really fucked...
Ujaku: When you told me that you had been compared to the Avalanches, I thought that was really weird, because when I saw you play at The Empress, the group it reminded me most of was like early 90's Boredoms, rather than the likes of the Avalanches. So the fact that you played with Testicle Candy made perfect sense to me, as they're kind of coming from that side of things as well.
Adam: We're not coming from that side though, we're coming from another side... that I can't explain.
Ujaku: It just looked so much like that though, so far as the visual side of things...
Adam: Yeah, they just go mental too? Throw shit at people?
Ujaku: Well, I don't know if they did that...
Adam: Wear costumes. Are they political, The Boredoms?
(a friend) : No, not really.
Adam: because racism is on the agenda for Curse Ov Dialect – eliminating it, and socially conscious lyrics
Daryl: I think that's the challenge though, to do something that's really theatrical and crazy on the one hand, but actually send out a message as well.
Adam: We have to do that. Lately we've tried, to have less people on stage so that you can hear what we are talking about. That was the whole reason we started the band back in '94, '93...
Ujaku: Yeah that wasn't the case at Revolver, it was impossible to tell what each person was saying...
Adam: But you still kind of get the pulse –
Ujaku: Yeah that whole show said something really full-on, I thought – regardless of the fact you couldn't make out what was going on.
Daryl: Don't worry neither could we...
Ujaku: But you could still read something from what was going on. It was almost completely different to almost everything else that was on at the festival – most of the stuff was very muted visually. So how about the serial pest – did you guys come into direct contact with him?
Daryl: I didn't even know he was there...
Adam: Yeah, until Robbie said, "He's gone on TV", and shit. Before that I was like, I had no idea what was going on. Then I was just laughing...
Daryl: We should explain...
Ujaku: Yeah I'd like to hear about it, because I didn't see it.
Adam: First of all David Grohl played -
Daryl: I didn't even know he was up there either. They [Testicle Candy] had a dulcimer at that stage...
Adam: That was Lucas Abela's.
Daryl: ...and this guy was playing it – I had no idea who he was.
Adam: Until one of the members of Curse thought, "hey, this is David Grohl, let's give him a demo!"
Daryl: I was already dressed up in my costume, and I went up to him playing the dulcimer and started making a beat with my feet, on the concrete.
Adam: I actually knew before, like Ray from the Hard-Ons, who is one of the members of Testicle Candy, he goes "I'm going to sell this blood drenched shirt", because he got cut during the performance, he was going to sell it to one of the teeny boppers that were trying to get in backstage. You know one of the members of Curse spat watermelon on his head –
Ujaku: On Dave Grohl's head?
Adam: Yeah and his head got cut by a mike stand or something. All around the floor was covered in piss because Eric, he took a plastic bag, filled it with piss, then put one chunk of shit in it and it went all over the place. As well as the watermelon we brought, and chutney.
Daryl: By the way, it was Eric who dacked Peter Horre.
Ujaku: Oh. OK.
Adam: and he spat on his dick as well. It was the most full-on gig...
Daryl: and speaker damage...
Ujaku: Yeah, I heard there's been some repercussions from that.
Adam: ...yeah I think myself and Lucas Abela were involved in that.
Daryl: I'd just like to say that I had nothing to do with it, and that I was on the ground the whole time.
Ujaku: It's funny, it just seems so weird to me that Dave Grohl was involved in that, and got injured. Here's this guy that I've seen on TV, on fuckin' Video Hits or whatever.
Daryl: He loved it actually.
Ujaku: Yeah, it just says so much about him as a person.
Adam: Shows that he must be into experimental shit.
[Adam then tells me about the members of the group and their roles. It is suggested that a few occasional members are like the S1Ws of the group...]
Adam: yeah... Public Enemy is still a big influence though
Ujaku: Really?
Adam: Yeah, for me personally. When I was growing up, I wanted to turn myself black. I used to walk around hating my own race...
Daryl: What, did you use shoe polish? [Jokingly]
Adam: I did! I put it on here [gestures to mustache area] to have like a homie mustache in my school photo! I was fully hard-core, man; I used to think I was black, because I thought all my people were racist. You know, you get into Hip-Hop – like I'm almost 24 now, this was when I was 16 – when you're young, you're lead by external influences that pollute your mind with madness.

Up Next...

Ujaku: The other thing I wanted to ask was about the near future – do you have any live shows coming up?
Adam: City Lights [SP?] an art exhibition, possibly Revolver and Empress again.
Daryl: Revolver and Empress have been really kind to us.
Ujaku: How did the show at the Empress go on the weekend?
Daryl: I really enjoyed that. It was really simple, like we had the four core members. It was cleaner, there were less people on stage so the clarity of the show was a lot better, but it still had that crazy element. That's what I like, you know, mic cords don't get tangled and you still get to do your lyrics you know? No shit on the floor... we also want to clarify why we do what we do, and that's what we did at the Empress. OK, we're going to be acting crazy, looking like this, putting out a certain image, but why are we doing it? There's a reason behind it... ■

A brief e-mail exchange with Arek Gulbenkogu of Dworzec.

Dworzec

l-r: Henry Krips, Louise Conroy, Arek Gulbenkoglu (hiding). Also hiding (but much further away) is Antony Eagle

Do any of the group's members have any formal music training? How has each member's development occurred?

There is a strand of musical training (in the formal sense) within the group, yet how this may impact on Dworzec is uncertain. Lou is probably the most accomplished, having been accepted into the University of Melbourne music program before dropping out in O'week! I guess my main training is on the french horn, which I played for about 7 years in various classical groups as a youngster. Antony and Henry don't really have any formal training, although Henry is one of the most naturally gifted musicians I've ever met. He has some good genetics on his side. Antony's lack of formal training has served him well considering he has taken out the "Dworzec great innovation" prize over last two years - he's a real musical McGyver. I think our personal development has occurred mostly within the confines of the group. Although how we play may be external to formal notions of musicianship, we have all worked hard at mastering our respective crafts. This is no doubt an endless process...

Having only seen the band perform as a three piece, I actually had no idea Henry was still involved (having noticed his name in the CD insert). What is his role in the group presently?

Actually Antony is the member currently overseas. He's moved to New Jersey to do postgraduate studies. He is still very much a member of the group. He has been sending mini-disc recordings which we have used in performances. He is going to be returning to Melbourne three months each year, so hopefully we can do recordings/shows during these periods.

How were you all lead to Dworzec? At least in some respects, I think the sounds and feelings you explore are ones with quite a rich history of development particularly during the last 100 years. Were you inspired (either personally or as a group) by improvisers, electroacoustic composers and the like to pursue this 'sound', or did you experiment in isolation from this, later becoming aware of what was 'out there'?

We were all friends before Dworzec began. Initially Ant, Henry and myself would just fuck around with a four track, improvising once a week. Lou was at a dinner party held by Ant's girlfriend, and it came up that she had an accordion and some reeds. We thought it might be interesting to have a session sometime. Things worked out pretty well that first night, hence you have Dworzec. I'm not quite sure how we relate to the recent history of music, maybe you could elaborate a bit on what you mean in regard to 'sounds and feelings'...

I can only speak personally in relation to inspirations, the others in the group would probably give quite different responses. I guess the most inspiring discovery for me was the concept of free improvisation. I really love the idea of people coming together, on an equal level, to create something which is beyond the sum of the parts. The communicative nature of improvising is a very simple yet special process. There is also that tension between freedom and responsibility which I find intriguing on a number of levels.

I guess I'm excited by music which has interesting textures, tones, colours etc., irrespective of idiom or methodology - MBV, Voice Crack, AMM, Xenakis, This Heat, Dead C., Fennesz... I think free improvisation is the most transparent format for exploring these facets of sound. We are constantly influenced by the various new music we hear around us. I couldn't really say how this manifests in what we do. I find myself stumbling across interesting new stuff all the time - that's the great thing with music I guess...

By 'sounds and feelings', I think I was referring to one thing in particular - the drone, and it's emotional impact on listeners. I mean there are newsgroups devoted to drone-based music on the Internet - it's a pretty active area I think, and I see you guys as a part of that. Maybe this just reflects my own lack of knowledge of the recent history of music! By 'sounds', I may also have been referring to what I think is an interest among members of the group to use instruments in new ways - or perhaps just in ways their creators may not have considered... any thoughts?

Drone is definitely part of what we do, yet there are many other components. Drone music seems to be quite a growth industry. It has a history going back awhile - Indian music, the whole NY minimalism thing, but I really probably don't know much more than yourself. I think the "peripheral" sounds Dworzec use are pretty central to our music. I'm currently really interested in the use and potential of little sounds. Using instruments in unusual ways produce new textures and in some ways disrupts the social meanings attached to various items. But again, this is merely a by-product - if it sounds good, we'll use it. As far as the feelings of the listener are concerned, I think responses are generally shaped by the person's perceptions and values. I'm a firm believer in the notion that reactions are usually based 25% on what's

coming out of the speaker, and 75% on headspace.

Musically speaking, does the sound of the group reflect your own listening? What art (either musical or otherwise) do you find inspiring? Do you think that you have any peers currently active, either here in Australia, or overseas?

I'm sure our listening habits influence our sound, but again it operates mostly at a sub-conscious level. I think a lot of people get hung up on the processes involved in making music to the detriment of the actual results. It's mostly a marketing tool, but I find the barriers between hi-fidelity/low-fidelity, digital/analogue, acoustic/electric pretty boring. Why people want to limit their access to certain sounds I can't understand. I think we absorb alot of different musical ideas and approaches into what we do, it's a continuous process. In terms of peers, I can only point out the people/artists who I find interesting. Local favourites include pimmon, gaf control, minit, Ambarchi/Avenaim. All these artists do different stuff; there is no common aesthetic, which I see as a positive. From an international perspective, I think you could maybe draw links to groups such as spunk, supersilent, ashtray navigations, the metonymic crew, k-salvatore...

There were a number of people also on the bill for the What Is Music? Festival this year that I personally felt shared some common ground with your approach - Keith Rowe in particular. Did his performances have any impact on you, and do you agree with the above statement that you are exploring similar areas? (and I don't just mean because you both employ guitars, although in a seemingly laptop-dominated festival this did affect my thinking...)

What is music? was a lot of fun. I guess we were quite different to the majority of the bill (no laptop, no wacky instrumental onslaughts). I really enjoyed Pita's sets (his Dj set in Sydney was sheer mayhem!), as well the "laptop orchestra" improv settings. It was a real pleasure to witness Keith Rowe play, I love AMM' s music so much. I think they are a really important group. Dworzec may be exploring similar realms (mostly in approach), but to even contemplate making a comparison is just way too embarrassing. You can definitely hear the influence of AMM in much of the "younger" generation, even the Mego crowd.

Oh come on - I think a comparison is definitely in order! It's great to read how enthusiastic you are about AMM - this probably gets back to the point I made earlier about my own lack of knowledge when it comes to certain aspects of 20th Century music (Free Improvising being one...) but I know precious little about the group - I guess it's just easier for me to make a connection between the likes of mego and my own life. Can you recommend a good starting point for someone interested in them?

Trust me, once you hear some of their stuff you'll agree. A good starting point is the "Laminal" 3 cd set which has recordings from across the last thirty years. I'm kinda curious why you find it easier relating to mego et al. After all, I'm just a bogan from Glen Waverley myself.

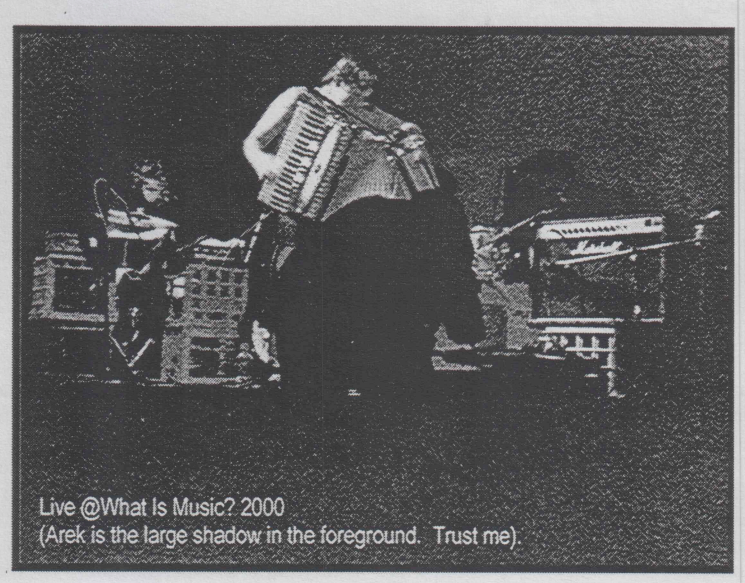
How did you feel about your collaboration with Pimmon? An enjoyable experience?

It was great to play with pimmon. He is a really clever artist who does fantastic work. He is such a lovely guy also. Our set felt quite weird (had some technical problems), but the audience feedback was really positive. I'll have to hear the recording still. Hopefully we can play again in the future.

How much of each performance would you say is improvised? What degree of preparation goes into the music, if any? Do you ever rehearse? Are you communicating with each other in some manner during performances? How? Has anyone in the group ever walked away from a performance unhappy with what happened?

The majority of each performance is improvised, although there are certain tricks and gestures which re-occur. There has been more preparation involved in performances of late. I do guitar preparations, and Henry and I have been making cdrs and tapes for use in performance also. Rehearsals occur probably for confidence sake rather than providing any real benefit. We'd like to think communication would stay at a musical level, although there may be instances where someone will gesture to end the set or ask for the time (when playing to

Dworzec (MPS 1999)



Live @What Is Music? 2000
(Arek is the large shadow in the foreground. Trust me).

an audience). I think there may be only a couple of times where everyone has walked away "happy" with a performance. We probably are our own harshest critics. But then again, we have played some rather shithouse sets. Highlights (or lowlights) have included a performance where the mixer ran off half way into a set leaving Henry and I inaudible, while Lou explored the full range of farting noises able to be executed on the accordion. People also made comments on Antony's (inadvertent)"drum solo". I think it was also this fine performance where the level of intensity was so great that Ant and Henry had a full conversation mid set.... Anyway, we all learnt our lesson.

I would love to see a video of that one! When was it, and in which venue? Have you ever had hostile audience reactions, or played anywhere you felt out of place?

That was last year at the Musicians Club (oh, the irony..). Our audiences seem to be really polite and respectful. We're eternally grateful to those people who come along to listen to us. As far as I'm concerned, the audience owes you fuck all. It is an absolute privilege to play in front of others. It's nice when there's a mutual respect there. We've never really had an outwardly hostile reaction. The worst was probably during our appearance at Melbourne Spring Fashion Week (true!). Needless to say, our 12-minute set pissed off the fashion kids to no end. ■

Dworzec **(MPS) CD and** ***Kairow*** **(King Records) 10" are available in Australia via Synaesthesia (see contacts)** ■

Minit: Interview

E-mail correspondence with Torben Tilly (one half of Minit) conducted March 2000

Photo: Catherine Forman

Can you explain Minit development to me? I understand that Jasmine was previously a member of Sydney group Alternahunk – did Minit form directly following that group's end?

Alternahunk had ended quite a long time before Minit came together. Jasmine and I had collaborated on a sound installation at The Performance Space in mid '97 and following this we got invited to do something at Memory Loss, which was a weekly night of experimental music at the Lansdowne Hotel in Sydney. Jasmine got the loan of a rack mount sampler and we would get together and timestretch until Jasmine started falling asleep, at which point I would continue stretching time for a bit longer. We were and still remain novices as far as knowing completely what a sampler can do. Just the other day we discovered for the first time a multiple loop function on the sampler that allows one to build a segued chronology of loops off the one sample. Like little bugs we have been toiling away on such a small part of undergrowth, not aware of the rest of the garden. So our music began quite simple and minimal, almost by default, but this has now become an integral part of the musical form. Like that idea of *hand habits*, one always seems to play the guitar in such and such a way and that becomes typical – well there are certain characteristics and ideas inherent in the early minit stuff that has kept reappearing in one way or another over time. I can identify certain aspects that we are interested in and we tend to explore them further. For instance, the idea of the implicit ghost melody created through the dialogical relationship of two motifs (loops) distinctly separated in the stereo field, as well as the kind of melodic/harmonic ghost that lies within the relationship of a sample that is sequenced simultaneously at different velocities. I guess this is a kind of psychoacoustics, the suggestion of a melodic form without it actually being there on the recording. We have written quite a few pieces based around one sample. Perhaps for this reason our music tends towards a minimalist form. The 12" we are soon releasing on Sigma Editions contains two pieces that are each built around one source sample - of Cornelius Cardew and Bela Bartok.

Were you both part of the recent tour to Europe by some of the Sigma Editions artists? If so, how did you find it? Did you witness any startling performances from European artists? Did the tour have any impact on the way you will work in the immediate future?

The Sigma Editions tour involved Minit, David Haines & Parmentier with Vladislav Delay joining us for our first show in Helsinki. We went on to do shows in Estonia, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands, over a period of two and half months. Minit also went to London to do a recording session for the radio programme *Mixing It* on BBC 3.
The show in Tallinn was particularly memorable. We arrived by boat to the Estonian capital, sharing a three hour ferry ride across an early morning misty Baltic Sea with hundreds of Finns on cheap alcohol, cigarettes and perfume shopping sprees. Having had no sleep after our Helsinki gig, and listening to a doleful Finnish swing band on the boat, we were then picked up by a Hare Krishna PopStar, whose car was regularly breaking down at the traffic lights. Our concert, advertised around Tallinn as a night of *Ambient Techno*, and actually organised by the Hare Krishna's was to be held in the gymnasium of a disused school (reaalkool). We arrived to find a group of kids decorating the gym with limbs of trees, krishna shrines, mowed grass, paint and glitter. I don't quite know what they were expecting but we weren't playing trance or techno, except David did get a few people jumping up and down to his set, perhaps just out of a burning desire to dance, although what he played that night was quite hypnotic and rhythmic. Whirling ecstatic piano refrains in staccato with lots of counter rhythms and melodies panning from left to right constantly. It was awesome, my favourite performance of his on the tour, along the lines of some of the stuff he was writing and recording when I first heard his music before the release of the album on Sigma Editions. Of course there were a handful of interested listeners there in Tallinn which made it seem worthwhile, but I think just the experience of being in Estonia was inspirational. The sun was setting at midnight and rising again at quarter to three. Rather than sink below, it skimmed along the horizon, and aurora activity was detectable in the surrounding sky...An amazing place that I would love to go back to at some point. I found a paper strand of soviet morse code which I brought back with me as a little souvenir.
One musical highlight for me on tour was seeing Noetinger and another guy associated with the Metamkine label (France) do a live improvised

piece in a small auditorium in Cologne. They each had a reel-to-reel, a microphone and some kind of outboard effect like a delay pedal. A length of tape ran in a loop between their tape machines and they faced each other standing at either end of a table. It seemed like quite a classic musique concrete set-up. It is the only live musique-concrete concert I can say I've seen, and it was spectacular. The sound came from all four corners of the room, a transient articulation of shapes hanging in the air that would just as suddenly splinter apart as they would appear, often spinning abruptly around in space.
Dat Politics were also great. They were invited to play at an A-musik gig in Cologne during the PopKomm Festival which attracts hundreds of thousands of music industry people to the city for one weekend. Mostly mainstream, but then there are the concerts that all the interesting people put on which makes it worthwhile. Jasmine and I were there because we had been invited as special guests at a Staubgold evening with Klangwart and Institute Fur Fein Motorik. Dat Politics is a five-piece laptop band from France with people who used to be in Tone Rec. They played in a space under the railway line, arched brick/concrete caverns which seemed acoustically sympathetic to the sound system. Dat Politics played the saboteur –fragmented free jazz electronics, with digitally burnt-out traces of pop song and drone-rock and brilliant use of stereo panning.
At a small jazz festival in Nickelsdorf, Austria, Farmers Manual conducted mischevious computer soundbombing for three hours straight, and Jim O'Rourke and Fennesz did a duo which started off with all these discombobulated old-school bigband samples that gradually fragmented into a transcendental granular white drone. This was also fantastic.
Jasmine and I had the chance to write some new material while we were in Europe. We had a period of about two weeks between some shows during the tour, which was mostly spent in a place called Ijmuiden – a small industrial seaside town an hour out of Amsterdam. We were staying in a cottage that was once the lighthouse keepers'. It was right on the main canal that runs from the English Channel through to Amsterdam with a view of a 24hour steelworks metropolis on the other side. Enormous tongues of purple and green flame would blast out of the tops of chimney stacks. All types of ships, from private sailing boats to supercontainer vessels fifteen stories high would glide past the window, rumbling the panes. So whenever I listen to the piece of music we wrote there (it is appearing on a CD compilation of Conrad Schnitzler reworkings on Plate Lunch), that place and its atmosphere just comes flooding back.

I'm not sure if this is typical, but during your set in Melbourne recently I noticed that your section of the Sigma live collaboration pursued a much more clearly defined sense of rhythm – although David Haines' and Rosy Parlane's sections had a sense of forward movement, you guys were actually moving to the low end rhythms established. Is there a conscious effort being made to work with/focus on rhythm? Can you see any relationship (in this regard) with dance music?

We are both interested in certain elements of contemporary dance music, mostly the experimental, minimal side of techno – for example Panasonic, Mika Vainio and other early releases on Sahko, Thomas Brinkmann's variations, Wolfgang Voigt and the Profan releases, and some of the Detroit stuff and so forth. Mind you, for some of the same reasons the early minimalist compositions of Steve Reich and Phillip Glass are interesting. I guess we have absorbed techno because of its unavoidable ubiquity and we have toyed with the idea of writing some but what form that takes I don't know. If so it probably will be under another name. We like to tinker on the brink of regularity and irregularity. We are interested in repetition but also in that psychedelic moment when repetition slips or shifts. Pulses, not necessarily beats – a kind of somnambular music. The first band I played in (The Garbage & The Flowers) I was the drummer, so maybe this has a veiled influence on some of the rhythmic qualities of Minit.

How do you view live performance? Is it an integral part of what you do, or simply an opportunity to play your material through a big PA?

Live performance is actually quite integral to our music-making process. Nothing on *Minit : Music* involved any overdubbing, it was all recorded live off a sampler and sequencer. Our performances can vary in structure and dynamics quite a lot, the nature of the compositions allowing for many variations, which feeds the whole process of composing new material (though we are painfully slow in actually recording). Playing on great systems of course makes it all the more enjoyable and worthwhile. Sometimes I feel that we are a little too reliant on the specificity of EQs for our samples, which can make playing live temperamental and laborious when we have to do lots of soundchecking.

When I interviewed Parmentier some months back (more like a year and a half...) they made specific mention of their then use of low-end, relatively cheap equipment such as the Luxsound sampler. Do you also employ vintage/analogue/low-end equipment for Minit's compositions, or do you favour computer software for track composition?

Minit music began on an Akai S950 sampler along with a few outboard effects and the use of a beautiful Roland Jupiter 5 analogue synth. Nothing much has changed since then, except we don't have the Jupiter and now we use an Akai 1000, which these days, in the presence of the almighty computer seems somewhat Luddite. But we have resisted adorning our set-up with anything more hi-tech (analogue or digital), preferring instead to fossick around with the small patch of gumboot machinery we have. We are beginning to use a computer, but it is usually just for hard-disc recording and subsequent editing, panning and volume setting, maybe the odd bit of sound manipulation prior to structuring a piece of music. It was nice to discover that Fennesz always plays with a couple of guitar pedals hooked up to his laptop, a sign of his rock leanings. We have made an effort to get a VU kind of warmth into our sound, either by recording to reel-to-reel, and/or from the kinds of samples we create and their EQs.
Parmentier have been a big influence on us. When there is often the urge to add more and muddy the waters, they manage to keep it beautifully minimal, revealing the strength and volubility of a singular motif, or the relationship between say two motifs. I think *Luxsound* is a masterpiece in its expression of this. One must choose sampled material carefully and the kinds of loops that are subsequently made, because they must live up to the test of time. Staying at Delay's apartment in Helsinki provided a similar inspiration in that he plays loops, anywhere between 15 and 30 seconds long, over and over for a couple of days, making sure they have longevity. Interestingly, they never once got boring. (This habit of playing loops for days on end ties in with his interest in *sound furniture*, something I think he will eventually publish in some form or another.)

Was there any pre-planning before the performances at What Is Music? (besides actually setting up your equipment I mean...) How did you decide playing order/time duration, and were the joining points between each of the three performances orchestrated? Does/did improvisation play a role at all?

There was very little planning involved in those shows. We had been told we were not allowed to play for longer than ten minutes each – how ridiculous is that, especially for the kind of music we are writing – so we decided on an order based on the reputation Minit had gained on tour of playing overtime, and taking the longest to set-up. If we go last we can't fuck up the others' slot. It was a great experience however to have done that and been up on stage all at once. I think we realised where our music crosses over and where it diverges in style and approach. For Minit, improvisation lies inherently within the variational potential of the compositions themselves, which will often change shape and patterning each time we play them, sometimes radically, sometimes quite minutely. Track 1 on the album is a good example of this as it is a variation that came about from the live performance of track 5.

Was Minit: Music recorded by yourselves, or did you use 'traditional' studio facilities? Was the process used for this recording different from the one used for your recent live shows?

It was recorded by ourselves in a couple of locations – at a terrace house in Erskineville and at a church in Wynyard which is now the regular studio. All the same gear you would have seen us using at those live shows in Melbourne. We like to get recordings mastered of course, and we have been doing that with a guy called Paul Bryant here in Sydney.

Are there any more releases planned for the near future?

We have just released a 7" single called *Bootleg* on Cologne-based label Tonschacht which includes a Chicks On Speed reworking and a piece called *Four* that originally appeared on the Snawklor 50 RP 8" polycarbonate release. We have a track on the Conrad Schnitzler *reworked* triple CD compilation to be released on Plate Lunch. We are releasing a 12" on Sigma Editions within the next couple of months, and beginning work on material for a Sigma Editions full-length album. We are also going to Europe again in September and October, hopefully doing shows in Italy, Switzerland, France, Germany and Austria. ■

The *Minit: Music* CD (Sigma Editions) and *Bootleg* 7" (Tonschacht) are available in Australia via Synaesthesia (see contacts) ■

Martin Ng

I found it hard to present this interview with Sydney based artist Martin Ng in a way I felt was appropriate. I wanted to place the interview under a group name, so that I would have another name/drawcard to plaster on the front of this issue. 'Testicle Candy' was pretty attractive, and I liked the sound of 'Hydrogen Jukebox', but to use one as the heading would be to neglect too much. What about his collaborations, DJ work, and upcoming solo material? Forget it – here's an interview conducted via e-mail early this year with an Australian artist that cannot be placed under an all-encompassing title. It's all different, and it's all good.

How were you initially led to the turntables as an instrument? Do you have a background in Hip-Hop or DJing (as most turntablists seem to), or does your musical background lie somewhere else entirely?

Yes well...the turntablism thing was an intuitive development from my DJing, radio broadcasting and music/sound making. I started out as a club DJ in the late 80s but even from the very beginning I was much more interested in making entirely new sonic permutations out of records than in providing a conveyor belt of bpm mixed hits. I remember one of my first major club sets featured stuff such as Detroit techno on the right channel beat mixed with Egyptian percussion solos on the left channel with a dramatically slowed down Miles Davis solo floating in the middle. As you would guess, such practices didn't translate to any longevity in the duff..duff..duff.. arena of dance clubs!

As a musician with an interest in a variety of instruments (keyboards, contact mics, percussion etc.), my instinctive response to a turntable is to physically fuck with it. My view of a DJ is as a sonic bio-engineer - shredding and decimating recorded sounds into their molecular-genetic fragments, and then transmuting them into unheard-of sound chimeras.

In terms of a "musical background", I see myself as belonging to (and of course influenced by) a long tradition of sound fetishists/shamans including Noh theatre, Gnawa musicians, Varese, Henri, Partch, Stalling, Parmegianni, Davis, Zorn, Marclay etc.

I lurve some hip hop stuff (and I love skratchaphonics) but it's a genre I've never really wanted to emulate.

Is Sydney a good place to operate from as an artist? Is there anything going on in the city at the moment (musically speaking) that you are enthusiastic about?

Sydney is a good place to operate as a musician if you're not particularly interested in playing gigs and if you do not expect widespread empathy for what you are pursuing. It's notoriously difficult to get any sort of gig in Sydney other than for middle-of-the-road music. Unlike Melbourne, there is a profound undersupply of venues and, the licensing laws make it prohibitively expensive for anyone wishing to take risks and open up something interesting. This has had a detrimental effect on audiences in that people really don't expect to go out to hear/see things that often. For example, during the last few years, audiences for the What is Music? Festival has been consistently far higher in Melbourne.

Despite or because of this, Sydney has always had a surprisingly diverse and healthy community of passionate musicians chipping away at new sonic frontiers. Jim Denley has a view that the dearth of live activity in Sydney perversely leads to greater artistic productivity in that we all end up locking ourselves in our studios more often and making more music (- this is a view passionately shared by Vienna's Mego musicians about Vienna). This seems particularly true of Oren Ambarchi whose sound has evolved dramatically over the last two years. Oren returned to a very quiet Sydney after busy time in Japan and New York in late 97. He found the return to a gigless Sydney initially depressing but he has transcended that by busily recording and pushing his own sound to new zones.

There's a few things to get excited about in Sydney at the moment such as : mathematician Gordon Monroe's wild polymorphing sonic entities, the prolific Pimmon, Minit, Rik Rue's wonderful soundscapes for the kickass movement ensemble Gravity Feed and Jim Denley's transmutation of his flutes and reeds into the digital realm..... Amongst other things...

Can you tell me a bit about your radio show *Hydrogen Jukebox*, and give an indication of the current playlist? Is it reflective of your own listening?

The Hydrogen Jukebox (HJ) is but the latest in a long series of radio shows that pursues my vision of radio as a potent stage on which to explore challenging concepts in sound. Like Antonin Artaud and aspects of his Grand Guignol in the earlier part of the 20th century, I've often dreamt of radio as means of sonic transcendence.

HJ is run by myself and web-based artist Zina Kaye. The Jukebox is a combustible and promiscuous alchemy of all-out studio jams interwoven with documentary-style segments of relative lucidity. Sonic Dionysius and Apollo on the same cake if you like. On the sound jamming side of things we've recently featured the likes of the touring Mego crew, DJ Spooky, Stevie Wishart and Amsterdam's theory jockey ("TJ") Geert Lovink etc. - all getting dirty with the earrational HJ machine. On the music "doco" side of things we've had Oren Ambarchi presenting an impeccable program on La Monte Young, specialist Brazillian broadcaster Chris Lamaro on Tropicalia, cellist/academic John Napier on Northern Indian vocal music and our own scattershot history of 20th century sound etc.

As we spend much of the time splicing and reconfiguring sound, records don't often get played unmutated. Anyway, here's an example of the stuff we serve up:

- Bernard Parmegiani - *De Natura Sonorum* & all other available works
- PhonopsychographDISK - *Ancient Termites*
- Oren Ambarchi - *Insulation*
- Toru Takemitsu - *Film Music*
- Ryoji Ikeda - *time and space*
- Joao Gilberto - *Eu sei que vou te amar*
- Farmers Manual - recent live recordings
- Cachao y su Ritmo Caliente - *Descargas*
- Allen Ginsberg - *Howl* and other poems

HJ has its own sonic preoccupations and aesthetics which aren't always reflective of my own listening at home. In general my own listening is probably more earthy than HJ or my musical output. (I guess this is similar to the way the guys in Pan sonic don't spend their time listening to electronica but rather to reggae & dub).

Incidentally, HJ can be heard in Sydney on 2RES FM 89.7 Wednesday nights from 9 to midnight. We're also webcast on laudanum.net. HJ's up and coming website is on laudanum.net/hydrogen

How did your involvement with Testicle Candy come about? I was pretty impressed with the amount of chaos the group generates live - have things ever become dangerous? Did you have much direct involvement with the events at the Big Day Out show/s, specifically the one that made it onto *Today Tonight*?

Testicle Candy (TC) was originally conceived by Oren Ambarchi as a mutant rock band which was about exploring ear shattering noise peaks. It started in 1994 and originally featured Oren, Robbie Avenaim, Masahiro Koyanagi (Mould), Lucas Abela, Ray from the Hard-Ons and myself. Masa hasn't featured in the band in recent years as he lives in Japan.

Lucas and I have been the freak instrument players in the band. With the exception of the recent Melbourne gigs, I usually play an array of Fixed body contact mics that provide an earrational field of movement dependent feedback + a form of electronic body percussion. My larynx is also throat miked. This is a set up I originally developed for a noise piece for Butoh dancers featuring Rob , Lucas and myself. Lucas was the original turntablist of the band playing a "Freddy Kruger" style long glove with record needles emanating from the ends of each finger. As you know, he know plays his Peeled Heart's Paste mutant sonic machinery in the band.

It seems that the band is closely followed by the Black Star of unpredictable chaos. One concert at the Tote (Melbourne) dissolved into an all out glass bottle and food throwing affair amidst Ray fire breathing straight into the audience. During another gig, a BOOM ! came from behind the stage late in the gig. Oren then opened the back stage door leading out to the street and led the masses out to continue the brutal proceedings amidst a crashed and overturned car whilst police and rescue squads were arriving to excavate the injured.

I think the band generates a lot of on stage chaos but most of the freaky events are totally unplanned. The well publicised recent Big Day Out gig with the Curse ov Dialect that ended with a stage destroyed and covered in food/shit/piss/glass, a laceration on Foo Fighters' frontman Dave Grohl's head (who was our guest drummer) and, during which Melbourne's serial streaker Peter Hoare got to shit-wrestle with the equally naked Curse boys and Lucas...was mostly fucking coincidental! Certainly our music goes with the anarchy and, perhaps the gigs are just the right catalyst for people to lose the plot.

Using the example of your duo performance with Jim Denley, do you meet with collaborators prior to shows to work on ideas, or do you prefer not to pre-plan? Can you describe the communication that existed between yourself and Jim during the show?

Jim and I have played intermittently together for several years and I think we have a reasonable grasp of each other's sonic vocabulary.

Our present duo is result of a concert at the Sydney Opera House's Studio last year. Whilst we have never explicitly discussed the direction of the duo, a lot of rehearsal and individual fine tuning went into the duo prior to that first gig. We have subsequently developed much further with each series of gigs, largely through an intuitive relationship that comes when you play together over time.

Jim's sound on the flutes and sax is utterly unique and compelling. For me, his sound is a highly textural exploration of tone. His thick windy flute textures are almost TACTILE. Consequently for our duo, my playing takes on a more textural aspect. Surface noises and characteristics are really pushed into the foreground.

In terms of vinyl, what do you primarily use as source material? Or is this not as important as what is done to the vinyl, bearing in mind that you tend to take a pretty physical approach to the decks in comparison to some...

For me, the primary source recordings have become increasingly irrelevant. In earlier projects such as Oren's stagings of Zorn's comprovisational piece "Cobra", what source material I actually played at a particular time seemed crucial. Over the years, my turntable vocabulary has become more personal & abstract & mad. I am much more interested in what the turntable techniques generate from the vinyl rather than what is actually ON the vinyl grooves.

Regarding your performance/s with Hiaz of Farmer's Manual, was the material pre-planned, or largely improvised? Was it pre-arranged before the festival (ie. had you been in contact with the FM guys previously?)

Hiaz Gmachl & I met for the first time during the recent WIM. Pretty early on, we decided that we had mutually compatible waveform fixations and decided to team up for most of the fest.

One of Hiaz's THINGS is the sonification of data. He and the FM guys write all sorts of complex and mad algorithms for transmutating data into sound.

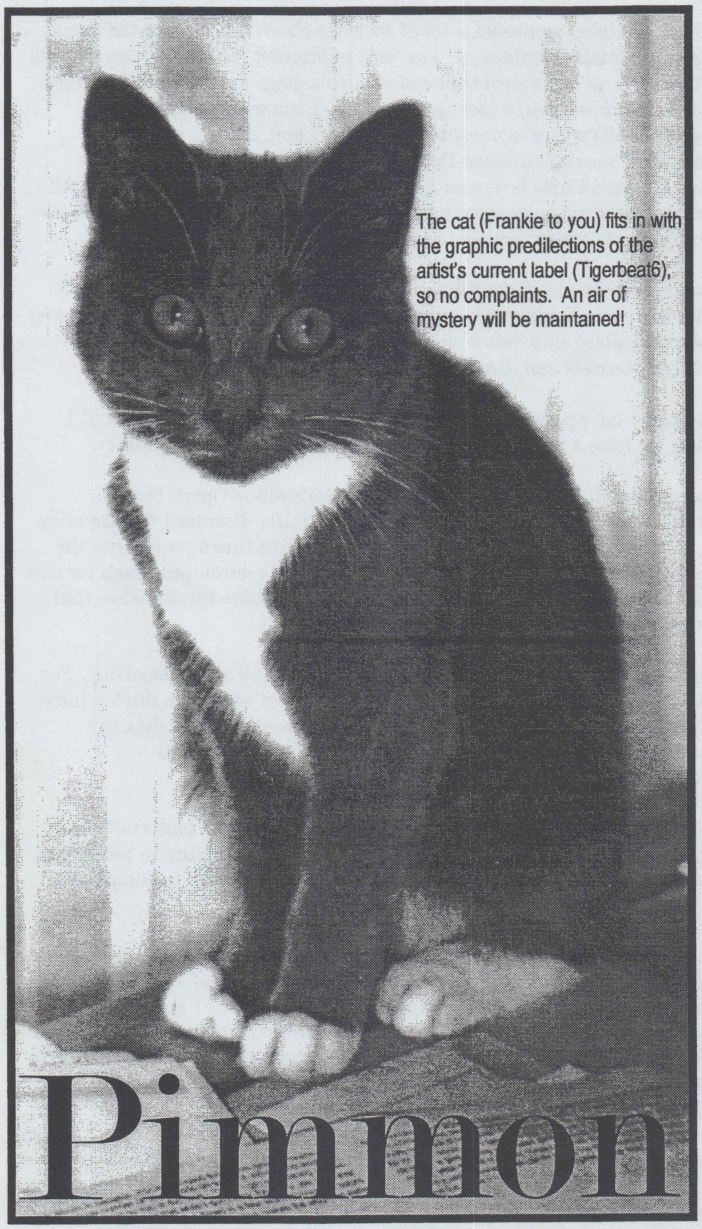
Our gig basically involved live computer-based transformation of my turntable output. All the gigs were improvised but listening to the recordings what he does to my sound is awesome and inexplicable.

Do you have any recorded output? Is there anything planned for the near future? Any live performances coming up shortly?

Other than the electro-acoustic scores for some obscure short films, I have no recorded output. People tell me that this is pathetic given my obsession with all things audible, and it is... but my near all-consuming day job has consistently put the spanner in the works over the last 6 years.

I am taking it easy job-wise for the first time in years so "yes", there are things in the pipeline. Jim Denley & I are currently editing our record which will be out soon. A solo record should be completed before year's end and I am due to send stuff to the Mego online label Falsch. Hiaz and I are trying to work out the possibility of recording during a European trip. Finally, Lucas and I have planned to grind our sonic gristle for a Dual Plover thing soon, and..... Our much spoken of Testicle Candy debut may materialise depending on how busy and motivated everybody is...

Gigs ?#* What gigs ?#^&(*$%^$%^#! Didn't I tell you I live in Sydney? ■



The cat (Frankie to you) fits in with the graphic predilections of the artist's current label (Tigerbeat6), so no complaints. An air of mystery will be maintained!

I get the impression you have been pursuing an interest in electronic music for some time. How did your enthusiasm for making music develop?

Way back! I began in 1981...I was inspired by Severed Heads firstly...as well as a wonderful Sydney 'scene' that recorded on the M' label. This included artists like The Makers of the Dead Travel Fast, Systematics, Prod, Wild West, Scattered Order...it was a very exciting time and I was at a crossroads of musical interest. I'd always been a 'listener' and a collector of sounds as a child...I started collecting records when I was 9. So I can recall when I was 16 first hearing non-commercial music and I was amazed that there was this 'other' world. I was like a sponge, soaking up as much as I could. I used to go to gigs [obviously I was under-age] and I was amazed by all this energy...it was a very exciting time for me.

I bought a Korg MS20 and a Tascam 4 track, I borrowed a crappy Dr Rhythm machine and an old analog tape delay...and started...it was a mixture of sped up vocals, found sounds, backwards guitar solos, weird chanting...everything but the kitchen sink...there were occasional melodies...overall it was bloody awful ! But it was a start. I did release a couple of tapes...all done by myself...then I sort of gave up...but I always kept recording in fits and starts...

None of the names you mentioned from Sydney in 1981 are familiar to me - in fact I don't think I've heard of the M' label either. Can you tell me a little about these people?

M' were Mitch Jones, Patrick Gibson and Michael Tee who were in bands like Scattered Order, Systematics, Ya Ya Choral...they had many smaller bands...quite incestuous...they owned the wonderful M' studios in Surry Hills [Sydney] and they recorded and released their own works, some friends works too...they also recorded/produced a lot of small Sydney bands at the time...They started 1979/80...

Was there a common thread to the music?

It was more based on friendships than any musical link.... the material varied from electronic to abstract experimental.....even what I think is an early take on post-rock stuff [the Prod 7"]. The Makers of the Dead Travel Fast were a real favourite...an amazing amalgam of synth, sax, piano, percussion....

Any relation to the Severed Heads? Is the label's material still widely available?

None whatsoever...they did share some gigs from time to time...the M' is quite hard to come by, but I noticed that Tom Ellard [Severed Heads] is releasing some things on CDR at sevcom.com. Check his site for details. The Makers of Dead Travel Fast have a compilation CD on Extreme.

Although not as dense as some famous noise and free jazz practitioners, you do have an extensive discography in comparison to many Australian electronic music producers. Do you attempt to release all of your work, even if only on CDR, or does the public only see a small portion of all work completed?

Well....only a small portion has been released ! It's taken a long time [in my mind] from when I sent the Meme CD to when it came out...most of that material is 2 years old now...I released the *Pola Pola* CDR only as a promotional tool and a taster for that release...so in the interim, I have probably about 4 CDRs with finished material and another 4 with 'templates' or ideas I'm scratching about with...so there is a lot more. Eventually some will come out.... Recently I've done a lot of morphing of tracks...taking parts from one and adding it to another...

Can you describe the basic/typical process you employ in the construction of pieces from start to finish, or does it differ wildly from track to track?

It's vastly different...sometimes I'm a blank canvas when I record...other times [like just last week] I had a rough sketch of a track I've been trying to complete for a couple of months...it just fell into place...

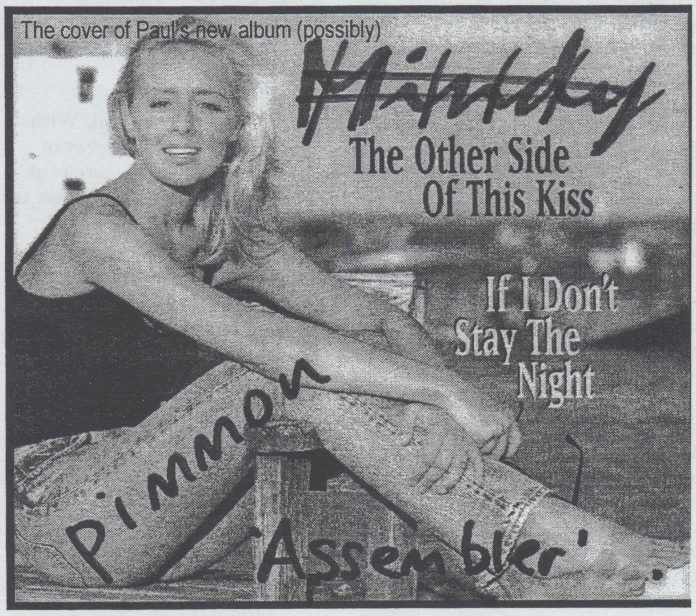
I guess the process I spend most time on is the 'file creation'. I do sample sounds and render them using a variety of software...once I have a pool of sounds I then start working out orders and placement...my methodology is quite haphazard. I never take notes and often I create a piece and have really no idea what I've done.

What were/are your thoughts about your collaborations at the What Is Music? Festival this year, in particular those with Christian Fennesz and Peter Rehberg from the Mego label (who I believe your work shares some common ground with), and Melbourne's Dworzec?

Well thanks for your 'common ground' thoughts! An honour! To be honest felt like the poor country cousin...I admire Fennesz et al work greatly so it was quite daunting to be working with them. I really enjoyed the collabs. In fact, in Melb while we performed I couldn't stop smiling because I was like 'pinch me, is this real?' I think the Melb. Show was the best...the Sydney felt bad, but we taped it and the first and last 10 minutes were good...it lost it's way in the middle...I pulled out some really bad files during that period and had some software problems...

We also had 2 hours of material recorded at a studio while in Sydney and came away very excited about that...hopefully it will be released at some stage.

The cover of Paul's new album (possibly)



Dworzec was a very exciting outfit to work with! Not only do I admire their music, they were extremely friendly as well. I think the collab worked really well, I felt the most confident of all with that live performance. This could have been that after 6 gigs in 10 days I was finally feeling more relaxed. When you consider I've only ever played 5 times prior to this festival it was really mind blowing. I liked working with Dworzec because I felt a little more freedom and I was able to really enjoy the drone aspect, which I love as much as pulses and blips...

Regarding the five-piece collaboration in Melbourne, can you recall who it was that dropped in that Reggae Rhythm? That was kind of the highlight of the set for me, as it changed the mood entirely. You did start dancing a bit then!

Yes..it was fun..Pita added that.... I threw in a mulched up King Tubby loop I had as well.... rare occasion when I could find something I wanted.. from memory the Melbourne performance was the better....

Your work seems to be popping up on labels from across the globe these days - is this a direct result of being very active on the Internet, and collaborating with like-minded folk worldwide?

Without the Net I'd be still doing stuff at home...it's a wonderful way to link and create networks...it's funny cause I'm not a salesman and hate 'pushing' people etc...but I've found that being on a variety of e-mail lists has been the way to get people to know about your work...I've done a lot of CDR trading with other artists and radio hosts and this has had very positive results. I still feel silly when I send out CDRs and wonder whether people will like what I do...it's a legacy of the 15 years of hesitancy...but I've received more positive feedback than negative...so that's a good sign I guess...

How did your involvement with people like Kid 606 come about? Is there a community of people in pursuit of similar artistic ideas developing?

Kid606 came about because someone sent a message that a guy in Slovenia was hosting a 2 hour realaudiocast of Pimmon!! The kid got in touch and we exchanged about 4 CDRs. He was extremely positive... and asked me to do a remix for his label Tigerbeat. Then he asked for another remix of N.W.A. material. Then it was a split release with Kurt Ralske [Cathars]...he's a very energetic and creative guy...and he likes to make fun of my PC! [He works for Apple]

As far as a community...I guess...it's like a series of bubbles that are all floating in the same stream and slowly inter-connect. It's allowed me to exchange ideas with people from Germany, Japan, UK, Peru...it's without a doubt why Pimmon has worked...

So there is still some contention about PC vs. Mac? I thought the differences between the two were negligible these days. Although it sounds like Kid 606 has a vested interest in being pro-Apple... What do you see as being the differences?

I think Macintosh have had the better software that allows both manipulation of files and great FM synthesis that's realtime...Max and Supercollider are programs that seem amazing...

On the PC side the real-time programs are harder to find... Audiomulch is the standout...I tend to work a lot on the preparation of files via various editing/manipulating techniques.... Kid606 often has joked about using PC's, at the end of the day though, it's what you can get out of what you use.... to be honest, I use both...I have a crappy old PPC that I run things like Soundhack etc to process files... then transfer to PC for final arranging...

Your mention of a contact in Peru kind of sticks out a little among some more expected locations... there are people involved in electronic music there?

Correction...I meant Chile...which does have an exciting electronic music scene. I believe Atom Heart resides there.... a friend who I've written to does a radio show and he has been supportive of my releases....

To what extent are you actively manipulating the sounds the audience hears when you perform live? Is this the focus of performing, or is it more on the choice of sounds to be accessed and presented? Is the software employed widely available, or do you write or adjust it yourself?

The sounds are manipulated live.... [that's why I wince when things go wrong!] I play with stored samples and also use some midi stuff...I do a lot of improvisation when I perform... I organise my sounds into appropriate folders and work from there...I guess that a performance is a window into how I do things...you are hearing my ideas develop...I try and represent tracks from releases...but they are often shadows or mutations of the originals...I think this keeps it fresh anyway. I don't write the software...I am waiting for wMax and that will be fun! I've tried using pd, but the windows environment is too unstable...

I'll have to plead ignorance of wMax - is this a program that is about to be released?

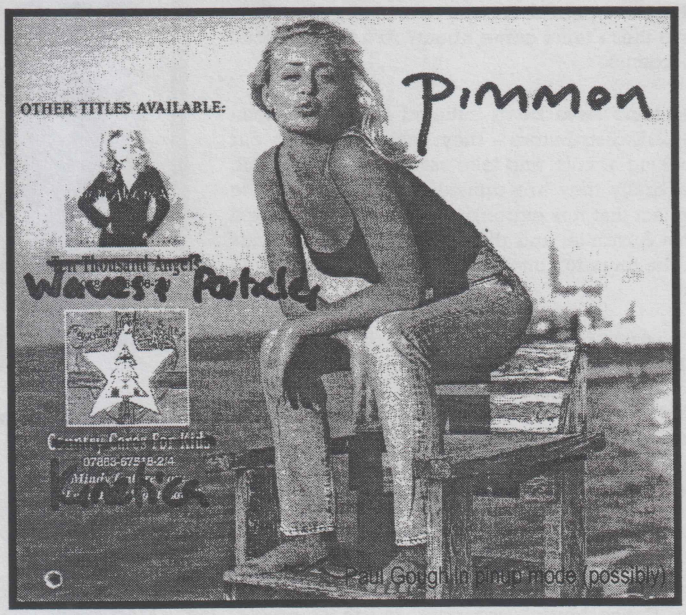
I think it may be called 'jMax'.... this is the Windows platform of Max [the Mac app I mentioned earlier]...it's in alpha testing phase at the moment...

How do you view live performance? I'm guessing that you have no set ideas about how you would like audiences to perceive what is going on, but I would like to know why you feel compelled to present this stuff in live venues?

I actually like performing live...whether others enjoy it or not I'm not sure. Visually it's probably boring...but I love to listen. I really don't care about visual stimulus [though, I thought SKOT were amazing at WIM]. So for me it's an airing of ideas, hopefully in a comfortable setting where people can either soak it all up listening closely...or chat to friends and let it slowly seep in...If you see me smile during performance...that really means I'm either happy with what I'm doing... or a sound rendering has surprised me and I'm figuring out new ways to move.... these moments are pivotal in my performance...they make the difference between enjoying and feeling like I've failed. I have to say I mainly feel terrible after I've finished, embarrassed... that things have all gone horribly wrong...

How would you counter the kinds of criticisms I heard from friends following performances from the 'laptoppers' @WIM? that there was nothing to watch? Is this irrelevant to your overall aims, or would you prefer people focus on the onstage projections (clearly the intent of SKOT's performance) - or alternately, would you perhaps prefer to perform in a club environment where people are more likely to dance, removing the visual focus from the artist to the audience?

I really don't care...as I say, I work with sound...do people need to watch something when they listen to music at home? As an audience member, I love the opportunity to listen to sounds I love through a bloody good PA [see Revolver] and soak it all in... everyone has different perceptions and needs. I guess it does seem better suited to listening environments or galleries...so...as there are few opportunities and venues to play, I'm hardly going to be too picky. Personally I'd be more upset if the sounds I created were criticised than the lack of me dancing or 'performing'.



When watching you perform in 40 degree heat with Oren Ambarchi, I noticed you wiped the sweat from your hands a number of times. Is there ever a danger that sweat might get into the keyboard and damage the internal workings of the computer?

Not sweat...I suffer from Carpel Tunnel and I was trying to get some life back into my wrists...I do sweat a lot too...but that's another story. I've never thought of that and perhaps I need a sweatband on wrist and forehead when I perform....

I've heard of DJs suffering from Carpal Tunnel also. I'm quite unfamiliar with the condition - how does it occur?

It's a kind of repetitive strain injury.... it's when the tissue around your wrist becomes inflamed and causes pressure on the nerves in the wrist to give 'pins and needles' in the hands/fingers....in my case I lose feeling in my fingers...making it difficult to operate the keyboard....it occurs under different weather conditions... ■

"No, there are currently NO outlets in Melbourne that stock BLOODY FIST vinyl. The trouble is that in Melbourne, everyone seems to think that any form of hardcore electronic music is 'old news' - you would have read it yourself in TRM. It's a self-perpetuating thing, because no shops stock it down there - people think it doesn't exist at all. Add to this the fact that the few people down there who DO actually like this form of music (or stock it), screw their fucking noses up when BLOODY FIST is mentioned due to the fact that we are also Australian - and you have an unsurprising situation of immense ignorance and snot nosed stupidity. I mean for fuck's sake - people down there think what we do is "GABBA"(!) That's like calling a band like SLIPKNOT "rap". As a matter of fact we have quite a lot of mail order customers from VIC, most of them NOT from fucking Melbourne. I would suggest that the best way to get our shit is straight from us". Mark Newlands Feb 2000

IRON NEWCASTLE

a night of shallow repetitive unsexy
electronic hardcore
over 30yrs not permitted (mullets excepted)

Can you tell me about the current activities of Bloody Fist? Are there any new releases, Live sets, overseas trips etc. planned for the near future?

We are always involved in regular Newcastle PUB gigs (about once every 6-8 weeks) - where about 150-300 people gather at a time and get drunk in front of a crap sound system. As for the new releases - we have a few new 12"'s in the pipeline - one from Disassembler (David Melo of Nasenbluten), and then another new one from Syndicate, who will also be touring Europe in June. Later in the year maybe there will be full length CD's from Syndicate and Nasenbluten, but don't hold your breath(s).

I'm aware that other people involved with the label have toured Europe previously also. How have these tours come about? Are they difficult to organise?

The tours have been initiated by our German and UK distributors - they basically act as our booking agents, and take care of all the bullshit. Generally they are difficult to organise due to the fact that it is expensive to fly back and forth from Australia, and there must be enough gigs on the tours to cover costs, and also allow us to eat.

In a recent interview you stated that you do not release dance music - but do you acknowledge the fact that the majority of the attention on the label comes from people involved in 'Dance Music Culture'? (the above statement was made in a magazine called 'Tekno Renegade' after all) - or do you see your activities existing in a different area to this, or perhaps in direct opposition to it?

We don't really always stop to look where our activities exist in proportion to everyone else. I guess that we do get attention from the "Dance Music" fraternity, but that's not our fault. Most plebs think that electronic music = dance music. We reckon that not all electronic music = dance music, and we also reckon that most dance music = effeminate. People 'dance' to Deicide - but that's not called 'dance music' is it? Anyway, what is this shit about music needing to serve a purpose?? I also think that people who are into 'dance music' are generally quite fickle and act like sheep - so it's excellent to goad them into adverse reactions, or maybe provoke or challenge them with something difficult or out of the ordinary.

I find your use of the word 'effeminate' interesting. Does this mean that you are after music that sounds masculine?

Don't look so horrified! If the truth be told - I'm genuinely interested in any electronic music that simply *isn't* effeminate. It can be *asexual* or *masculine* - either way as far as my perception goes, music of this ilk is still in the minority.

Do you think that this is exclusionary towards people who are not Hetero males, or does it have no relation at all to gender, just to the sound itself (ie. anyone may want to hear music that facilitates a release of aggression sometimes)?

I think that maybe our music (to a degree) is exclusionary towards people who are not Hetero males the same way effeminate dance music is exclusionary towards myself and people like me. (ie. white hetero 'lower class' male). I find that music exclusionary towards myself due to the fact that I see things as a realist - not a dreamer - I have pessimistic tendencies and a generally bleak outlook. Where does that music fit into my psyche? It doesn't. It's similar I guess to real Hip-Hop culture being exclusionary towards 'corny white boys' (although it doesn't stop some champions). Music is an exclusionary thing full stop - whichever way you look at it. Having said this however - I also recognise the fact that anyone may want to hear music that facilitates a release of aggression, and they are free to choose our material for this purpose, whoever they are.

When you state that this is not dance music, are you implying that you prefer that people not dance to Bloody Fist material? If so, how do you see the relationship between this stuff and the listener? (or is this irrelevant - are they purely a 'fast and furious aggression release' for yourself?)

When I say that it is not 'dance music' - I simply mean that we don't necessarily make records for the dance floor. I don't fucking care about people who complain that 'I can't dance to that!' GOOD! Don't dance to it! Be sick to it or listen to it or something more interesting... The same goes for people who DO dance to our records - FINE! Once our records come out of the pressing plant, it's completely irrelevant what people do with them. I view the records simply as a 'fast and furious aggression release' - what other people make of it is completely up to them.... we certainly don't run around claiming that it's dance music - because what we do is about a million miles away from what is generally accepted in this country as 'dance music'.

Do you continue to perform live? What approach to this do you take at present?

Yes. We lug our trusty AMIGA's around with us. When Nasenbluten perform live (rare these days) it is usually 2 AMIGA's, mixer, effects and 1 turntable... Other Bloody Fist acts are extremely boring to look at as well - and the point here is that the MUSIC is what matters - not the 'performance' of it.... Everyone in the electronic music scene is so wound up with the idea of trying to be like a 'real band' and perform as such. We on the other hand, loathe and despise the idea of 'bands', and I for one, enjoy music that 'bands' could never create organically. I enjoy the sound of machines, distortion, and generally anything that refuses to sound like a 'real instrument'.

I get the impression that you are perhaps somewhat hostile towards other electronic music producers here in Australia - do you feel you have ANY peers (or like-minded artists) within this country, or do you connect more with people overseas?

Hostility tends to breed hostility. We already know that people (especially Australians) are going to hate us and hate our music, so we approach any publicity on that level. We don't pretend that we are popular, we don't pretend that we are cool or important, we don't reside in a capital city and we don't suck anyone's cock, so automatically there is trouble when our name is brought up in conversation. Although, there are quite a few Australians who respect us for what we do, (and that's nice and all), it's certainly not our purpose for being here. We also have difficulty connecting with overseas people due to the fact that we have Australian accents and quite a dry sense of humour.

What kind of software/hardware are you employing at present? I recall reading that much of the software used for the initial batch of 12"s was very low-end, and was constructed in old Amiga 500s. Have you upgraded, or do you see this as being unimportant in the production of you music?

Some Bloody Fist acts still use AMIGA's running PROTRACKER 1.3 (!). The funny thing is that some of the output of this setup STILL shits on big production records made on loads of equipment. Others around here are using PC's which they bought with their royalties, and have cleaned up their sound a little, but still maintain an element of rawness and/or darkness. Personally I use an AMIGA 600 running PROTRACKER 2.3 (yes, PROTRACKER you cunts), and I have NO intention whatsoever of changing. A lot of electronic music producers live under the misconception that loads of equipment = good records. My personal view is the exact opposite - but then again I have a fetish for raw and repetitive simple sound. The interesting thing is that our equipment dictates our sound (to a degree), rather than the other way around, and I really enjoy working within these parameters.

I've found it difficult to track down information about Bloody Fist on the WWW - do you have a web presence at the moment?

Absolutely not.

Quite a while back an interview with Melbourne group Blood Duster appeared in the street press in Adelaide, and they mentioned the possibility of remixes by Nasenbluten appearing in the future - I haven't really kept up on that band's activities of late - did the remixes end up surfacing?

No, because I never fucking heard from them again after their initial call. They have played in Newcastle a couple of times, and have called me once or twice, but maybe the guy I spoke to had better things to do after all, like pull a few cones...

Quite likely, I'd guess! That kind of relates to an article I read a while back about Nasenbluten that made specific mention of the members' vegan diet and celibate lifestyle.

Jesus Christ. If we were vegans I doubt we'd have enough protein to fuck anything with a pulse.

Do you guys also abstain from drug use? I ask this as within certain youth cultures these three things seem to go hand in hand (ie. the Hardcore/Punk 'scene'...) Kind of irrelevant to the music, I know but... is it?

Well, I personally abstain from illicit drug use due to personal choice and doctors orders. It has nothing at all to do with my fetish for a big juicy steak and terse sex. Others involved here do not necessarily follow my example, and thats up to them. I know that there exists a straight -edge scene (same with a lot of forms of underground music), but I am indifferent to it, as with a lot of things.

On a related note, do you think that your music connects more with that of 'Metal' or 'Noise' groups than it does with that of dance producers?

I would hope so. I think that what we do would automatically be described as 'dance music' by the metal and noise fraternities, due to the fact that it is electronic and has 'repetitive beats' on most occasions (albeit distorted and mutated). I would rather be associated with Metal or noise than fucking 'dance music' any day.

Does the label continue to focus primarily on the Newcastle area? Is there a conscious effort being made to give the people from your immediate region a wider audience?

Yes, BLOODY FIST is STRICTLY Newcastle content. The cheap standard of living and the strong history of industry here are some of the reasons we were able to set up here in the first place, and keep it going on the smell of an oily rag. A lot of the people who record for BLOODY FIST are here because their grandparents or relatives worked at the steelworks at some stage over the past 87 years, and loads of people have gradually left the city over the past 20 or so years due to lack of work available and mass unemployment. This means that our overheads for running BF from Newcastle are practically fuck all, because Newcastle these days is little more than an oversized ghost town - the logical follow on from this is that I feel comfortable about keeping the operation based here, and it also follows that if I am taking advantage of Newcastle in a way (cheap rent and so on), it is only fair that I try and give something back. Besides this, there are hundreds of other 'labels' around the globe that release music akin to ours, Bloody Fist tends to stand out due to the fact that all content comes from the one geographic location.

I must admit that I don't really know too much about the labels overseas that release music akin to Bloody Fist (aside from Industrial Strength perhaps?) Can you suggest who some of the standouts O/S are?

Industrial Strength went bankrupt a while ago due to an over zealous cocaine habit. There are many other electronic hardcore labels which do a better job now anyway and actually pay their artists. There are too many to mention, but generally the UK labels and the German labels are the shit.

Are you in contact with like-minded people worldwide?

Yes indeed. ■

SPHAGNUM NAGASAKI

For a town with a population more befitting of the term 'regional centre', Adelaide sure produces quite a few 'zines. It is especially surprising because there are so few outlets for them; inevitably their creators tend to focus more on the eastern states audience, with Melbourne being the epicentre due to a number of significant distribution outlets (both retail and mailorder). There are a few exceptions to this though, a few perseverant individuals who manage to make their publications very visible. The fact is however that by and large I don't like them – they sell because the content is pitched at either indie pop snobs, unbearable lovers of boring personal writings or dumbass pop punk fanatics. There's one exception though, that has continually managed to make itself visible and provide content that doesn't make me gag: *Sphagnum Nagasaki*. Last issue I gave a pretty dismissive review of the 'zine, but it was for reasons I kind of regretted later. So what if the political ideology pushed through much of the material is not one I subscribe to? Evan Smith, the primary creative force behind the publication, is doing something no one else in Adelaide could be bothered with, so I don't care if the results are of the cut and paste variety. It's punk as fuck without the bullshit cultural conventions, and is worthy of attention because it is like a filthy snotty child in a 'zine rack filled with nice sweaters, long shorts and mop-tops. Interview conducted via E-mail early 2000.

Can you tell me about the current activities of *Sphagnum Nagasaki* and D-Trash Records?

Well, the current activities for *Sphagnum Nagasaki* are producing issue after issue after issue. It's not a chore though. I'm actually drained at the moment and everybody needs time to refuel their jets, so we're in hiatus until the creative juices flow again. Issue #8 featuring an interview with Lupus from the Bloodhound Gang is out now. I've interviewed Alec Empire from Atari Teenage Riot for the third time for the next issue but the interview is very long and it will take forver to transcribe. I'm also trying to hook up another interview with Mr Bungle as they are touring very soon. I hope it goes better than last time.

I have actually left the D-Trash organisation. There was a reshuffle with two bands leaving (Bastards United and ENSC) and the core is now CPUWAR, Cassandra Data Kill (formerly Dj Rabies), Schizoid and JV. Renegade Android and Knifehandchop left after disputes at the end of last year. D-Trash is now Data Trash technologies and will be releasing 12"s only.

Why did you think your last interview with Mr Bungle went badly? I really liked the one with Trey Spruance that appeared a while back - his criticisms of Atari Teenage Riot were pretty spot on in my view...

He just seemed to give me little in sight into the reasoning for Bungle/SC3 music. I wanted to know more about the musical process and even how they came to write the last album and what is was like and what directions they were taking. In retrospect, I could've asked better questions or at least followed them up but I think the interview was a bit lack lustre. I don't like e-mail interviews as much as face to face interviews because the answers seem to be very short and precise. (*Actually that's the exact reason I love them – that and being able to cut and paste without transcribing! – ujaku*) I want to interview them when they tour in a few weeks and really get to ask some intelligent questions. His criticism of ATR was a bit harsh, but I can see where he's coming from.

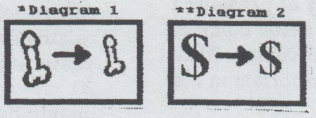
Were you unhappy with the way D-Trash was heading in some way?

Not really the projects, the music was getting better and better, but there were certain personalities that clashed and although, it was supposed an anarchic, non-hierarchal system, there were few people that became overpowering. As in Animal Farm - all people are created equal, but some are more equal than others.

A WORD FROM BOG.

LIKE MY PENIS*, THE SPHAGNUM NAGASAKI ZINE BUDGET** IS GETTING smaller AND smaller EACH DAY

*Diagram 1 **Diagram 2



HELP ME.
SEND YOUR HARD EARNED CASH TO:

evan smith
14 dunluce ave
brighton
sa 5048
australia

REMEMBER, DON'T DO IT FOR ME, DO IT FOR LITTLE ELVIS.

What was the thinking behind *Sphagnum Nagasaki* initially? It did seem that there was a variety of information present in the 'zine (ie. not just interviews with bands/musicians) - was there another motive behind/aim of the publication besides just presenting features on musicians/artists?

Well I did another zine before hand called 'The Kolonel's KFC Kaos' which was very badly layed out and written though it was damn hilarious for me and my friends. I felt I needed to write about stuff that interested me so I started *Sphagnum Nagasaki* in October 98 as a guide to my personal tastes. At this time there were no zines that I knew of dealing with harsh electronic music, eg digital hardcore so I felt that it needed to be done. There were dozens of artists that no one seemed to be writing about so it was change of pace from hardcore punk zines that seem so generic. I am also heavily into film, left wing politics and art so those were mish mashed into the zine. There have been criticisms that I don't know enough to make complete sense in my political writings but I'm only 18 so there's time to learn that stuff. Also I love to plagiarise, thanks to The Blind Authority Manipulation Corporation so I like to amalgamate all the things that are bizarre and interesting in print media and show everybody else what makes me tick.

It's interesting to see you refer to The Blind Authority Manipulation Corporation - I've been sent stuff by the responsible party/parties previously, but I must admit I kind of placed it in the same basket as the anarchist literature I am often sent by punk/hardcore fanzine types (and I can't stand that stuff...). Probably a mistake on my part, although I did like that 'Smile' Magazine that came out late last year. What ideas have you taken from the material you've seen?

In issue#2 of *Sphagnum*, I reproduced the Neoist Manifesto and took inspiration from the sloganeering of that SMILE zine. I liked the dada-ish/Winston Smith collages and tried my hand at that.

Has it been difficult to get the 'zine out to people in Adelaide? Has it ventured elsewhere at this point?

Yeah, it's tough as hell. There's a few stores that help you out, but you need contacts and other distros. The Internet is the biggest help that I have had. Big Star is the most helpful place in Adelaide, Verandah's a bit too scary and the guy at Pneumatic's a bit of a jerk, so I basically

distro myself. The zine is distro-ed through WAW (I think) and hoping to be thru some other ones soon. Also J Citizen from *Blatant Propaganda* zine wants to help me out as well as some other people on the eastern coast. There's another well known zine guy that I know that just has to keep rubbing it in that he can sell all these copies of his zine and it's so incredibly popular. Well if I wrote the shit that puts into his zine, I'm sure every hick would buy a copy of mine too.

Oh god, are you going to tell me who you are referring to? Please!!

Ok, the damn guy behind *Purple Monkey Dishwasher*. He told me he knows ya or something, so I didn't want to name names.

How did you initially get involved with D-Trash? What is your role within the label at present? Was it your work on Sphagnum Nagasaki that led to contact with these people?

Well, I first met Mike from CPUWAR through an emailing list and he sent me a few CD's to review. I got some other stuff from D-Trash guys and they were pretty good and I followed them closely. Issue #4 was dedicated to D-Trash. As the label grew they needed support, so I said I'd help them out and send CD's, news, press releases and so on to my contacts from *Sphagnum*. I helped them out printing up a 7" but that kinda didn't work out well. I was media whore and minister of propaganda for a while, but there was too much shit going down and I had to get out.

Are you involved with music production yourself?

No, I don't understand programming well enough to make music.

You seem to have a particular interest (at least judging from the content of your 'zine) in Digital Hardcore. Why does this stuff excite you at the moment? Do you maintain an interest in a wide range of music?

Digital Hardcore is the most exciting music 'genre' to surface in the 90's. It was stared through swindling a major label out of 1000's of pounds and is the angriest fusion of punk and techno. It is an interesting genre and it needs to be written about. I also enjoy a lot of other music - we've interviewed Bloodhound Gang, Sugarcubes, Bomb 20, ATR, Mr Bungle, Bran Flakes, Fudge Tunnel so there's a bit of variety. I was hoping to interview jazz/swing band Paris Combo a while ago but I forgot my Dictaphone.

I know nothing of The Paris Combo - are they from overseas?

They are from Paris. They actually do have an Australian trumpet player. They are really cool. I am trying to track down their Cd as we speak.

I understand you recently interviewed one of the most visible mugs in aggressive electronic music Alec Empire - did he provide some good type? Did you find that you personally share a lot of common ground with him in terms of the relationship between politics and popular music (or perhaps just western society in general)?

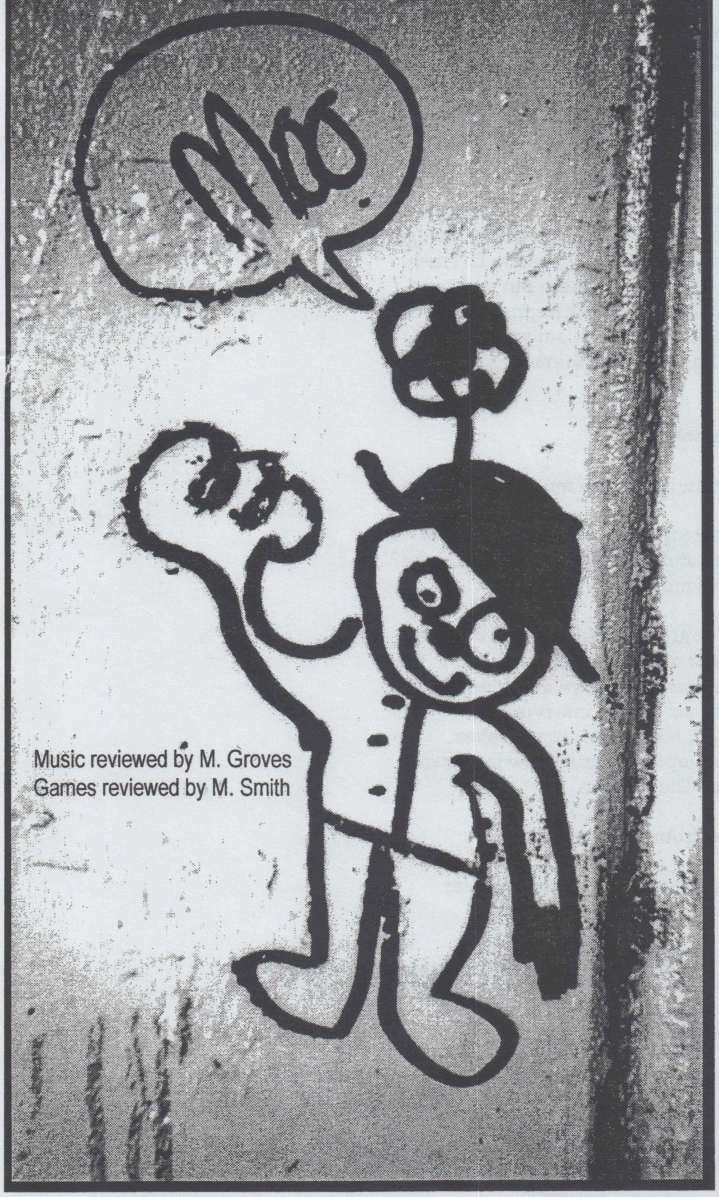
Yeah, Alec is cool. He's funny and talks for ages, but too much sometimes. If you ask the right questions, he can give you a very deep insight into one of the most interesting bands I've ever come across. I share the same love of music and the need for awareness of politics. He is essentially 'anarchist' while I am more leaning towards 'Marxism', but there's common ground there. He dissed my taste in films and was a cynical in my last interview but he's quite the professional.

What films did he take you to task over?

Well he looked at our 'greatest films of all time' article and didn't sound too impressed with *Clerks*, *Run Lola Run*, *Star Wars*. We argued over whether *Akira* was better than *Ghost In The Shell*, he saw *Ghost In The Shell* as the beginning of cyberexistence, fembots and so on. He thought I was too obsessed with Kubrick films and more specifically *A Clockwork Orange*. Pfft! His fave movies for the record are *Liquid Sky*, *Planet of the Vampires* and *The Man With The Golden Arm*. ■

Reviews

Send material for review to: 124 Hutton Street Thornbury VIC 3071
Policy: anything accepted, but no guarantees are given



Music reviewed by M. Groves
Games reviewed by M. Smith

Oren Ambarchi *Insulation* CD [Touch]
This big time (as in not restricted to 100 copies) solo disc from Mr. Ambarchi is a very attractive package from the get-go, with wonderful photographs and layout by Jon Wozencroft (whose book *Touch and Fuse*, also available from Touch, comes highly recommended) pointing the listener in the right direction before the disc is spun. Familiar and unfamiliar flora, an intersection of paths in some isolated locale, and blurred lights in motion elevate proceedings, with the Jerker logo popping up so I know this stuff isn't too get-over-yourself serious. The big deal about *Insulation* according to the reviews in the press (well, *The Wire*) seems to be the fact that it was constructed using guitar only, but this strikes me as being pretty much besides the fucking point. The undercurrent seems to be "look, he can make noises that sound like they come from a Mac laptop using only a guitar". Yeah well big fuckin' deal, I'm only concerned with whether or not it is a pleasure to listen to, and I'm pleased to report that it is. Careful placement of sound, a clear attention to detail, slow motion, little rhythm (no need) and nice ass quaking low end. I'm reminded of those stickers on Wordsound releases that say 'Sub friendly'. Outside of my bedroom window here in sunny Thornbury I often hear kids driving by with massive car stereos pumping four-on-the-floor basslines (primarily, although slimy rap also seems to be popular), and on many occasions I have entertained the idea of them slotting in something like this disc between the hump house and dirty G-funk. I'd seriously love to hear this through some massive subs! But you know it's not really cruising to get laid/pick up some E/visit a friend with a Playstation material, is it? Maybe Oren should approach Armand Van Heldon (or better yet, Basement Jaxx, or Supercollider!) for a remix? I'm only half joking...

Oren Ambarchi/Robbie Avenaim *Clockwork* 3"CDR [Jerker]
A live recording from 21.4.99. Well, I can't admit to really engaging with this one yet, but I don't think it really demands close attention by the listener. It seems to work best when allowed to run through at low volume while something else is the focus of attention. The ace sticker cover indicates guitar (but of course, no power chords or anything) percussion (very prominent in the mix, and the star of the show) and electronics (could be anything) have been employed. The audience reaction at the end sounds kind of highbrow, with polite applause and no screaming or smashing glass. Sounds like quite a few were in attendance – a festival perhaps? No drone, more countless variations on minimally sustaining chiming, clanging, and pinging sounds.

Captains Of Industry *Gone Soft* CD [Church of the Infinite]
Please jettison the dancefloor and the pursuit of cheese synth! Maybe there is a concerted effort being made to make use of established/familiar electronic sounds others refuse to touch - a sense of humor at work, or using association loaded sounds to produce music fulfilling some imaginary function. Whatever the case, I gotta use quite a bit of my own imagination for this to work. I'll take the groups' name as a starting point: the product development division in a large corporation develops muzak to soundtrack the lifestyles of employees both in and outside the workplace, with this CD being the result of their research. Kind of a crappy *Brave New World* style concept, but it works for me, and fits the title of the CD also: music as social sedative. I'm not talking about a vision of the future either; I see this idea occurring right now in a US company dedicated to a bizarre conception of employee welfare. The only problem is that this idea only works for portions of the album – how will the harsh digital crackle of the first track, and anti establishment soundbites of the last track fit? They do bookend the CD nicely, so maybe they could be additions made by dissatisfied employees, making the CD I hold in my hands a bastardized bootleg of the employee lifestyle CD described above. Ah fuck it, the more I think about this, the less it appeals. Can you picture how *Gone Soft* sounds based on what I have written?

Chicks On Speed *Glamour Girl* 10" [Go Records] *Mind Your Own Business* 7" [Go Records]
A way forward. Trimming the fat. Punk as fuck in the Malcolm Mclaren sense of the term, and now the toast of the *NME* and *The Face*. They seem to be remaining on track too, as the cover to a newer release I saw the other day (but for some reason decided not to pick up – must be that Visa debt) was as confronting as anything I've seen this year so far. I tend to favour the *Glamour Girl* 10" to the 7" - and not just because there is more time before I have to stand up and turn it over – it features *Turn of the Century*, a euphoric rock song with pounding bass thuds coming on like a less deluded digital hardcore. I played it in my room quite a bit on New Year's eve, in between going to the Laundromat, preparing for a party and drinking lots of beer (wait – those last two activities are the same thing).

John Clyde-Evans *[For ht/rp/j&s]* 12" [Fisheye]
A total fuckin' vinyl UFO. Minimal information, and a sound that could have come from anytime (anywhere!). I guess the reason this occurs to me is because the instrumentation is acoustic (so it doesn't sound 'of a particular time'), yet unidentifiable in the same way as Dworzec's recorded pieces. This recording has greater clarity than the Dworzec stuff I've heard though, so I guess the freaks (aliens?) traveled to another dimension (through time maybe) with a crystal clear DAT recorder in order to document some very strange goings on. Strings remain pretty dominant throughout proceedings, or maybe I'm only noting this because I can identify them within the drone. Nothing really specific is being said, so you are kind of left to your own devices to make interpretations and associations. It could be the soundtrack to the end of the world, but just as easily an accompaniment to a Sunday breakfast. I get the feeling that if a review of this record appeared in *Opprobrium* or *Resonance* or *The Wire*, it would be loaded with references to various key figures in 20th Century music, but I know precious little about any of the figures I have my suspicions about, so instead you get my no-nothing ramblings. I like this record, and I think you might too. Duh.

Darkthrone *Ravishing Grimness* CD [Moonfog]
Cover proclamation: "Darkthrone are artists of the true (with an *inverted* 't') Black Metal unlimited". After becoming quite interested in Black Metal last year (primarily through exposure to the defining book on the topic, *Lords of Chaos*), I found it increasingly difficult to fork over my cash for any release not by my favourite group in the genre, Emperor. I was still enthusiastic about Burzum and Ulver, however their recorded output was increasingly moving somewhere else entirely to the distinctly Metal sound I'm after when I seek out this stuff. In fact the only common ground they seem to share these days is in terms of ideology (little to do with the music, although they are still trying to get their respective 'messages', be they a dumbass take on Satanism, idiotic Fascism (not to imply there is another kind of Fascism), Paganism or whatever the fuck the current flavor of the month is across through music), and even then they are getting further apart. I heard other groups being played in the Bogan haunts around Adelaide, but they just didn't seem to be as powerful as Emperor's masterpieces *Athems to the Welkin at Dusk* and *IX Equilibrium*. Not even the likes of modern day Mayhem or Marduk, both undisputed members of the Nordic/Swedish inner circle (the stamp of quality!) could get me excited. Following my move to Melbourne, I decided to make an effort to explore some different groups, to widen my palette if you will. A Saturday afternoon visit to the wonderful Smoke Dreams establishment on Flinders Street was undertaken, with this record being one of the gems picked up on the day. Although I neglected to actually listen to this CD before purchase, I had a fair idea of what I was getting, having heard the band's earlier material sometime during 1999. Other deciding factors in my purchase related primarily to the cover art: the above proclamation, the album title itself, and the song title "Across the Vacuum" (all of which made me chuckle). Despite being in close contact with the Nordic Inner Circle (they are Oslo residents after all), Darkthrone actually come from a distinctly Death Metal background (*Lords of Chaos* makes mention of them wearing *jogging suits* early on), and pursue a slightly different sound to the likes of Satyricon and Emperor. We're talking more of a Motorhead chug rather than a Grindcore plus synth orchestral speed blur. Hell, some of the riffs get very close to early UK hardcore, like Discharge or something. This makes Darkthrone sound a bit more street tough than their contemporaries, and not as unrelenting – you have time to breathe!

Cristoph De Babalon/Kid 606 split 12" [Fat Cat]
Existing somewhere within territory occupied by Xenakis, Miami Bass, TLC and Pan Sonic. The digital glitch is exploited, but so is source material Australians see on *Video Hits*. A kind of bizarre no-man's land where fools like myself talk about the merits of Destiny's Child while listening to CDRs by Pimmon. Probably the best fun to be had these days, so chuck it all in the pot because you cannot deny that it all tastes good to you. Fuck exclusion, regardless of where it is coming from. Thanks Jon.

DJ Eddie Def *Wax People* CD [Hip Hop Slam]
It may just be the effect of excessive herb consumption, but Eddie Def seems less constrained in his selection of source material than many of the other Bay Area (and New York, for that matter) Hip-Hop DJs currently pumping out mix tape sourced CDs. You can pick the cultural anomalies when they crop up, they're not supposed to be hidden: grabs of Nine Inch Nails and Guns N' Roses (fuck yeah!) and bucketloads of classic rock among the more orthodox passages of electro rhythms, sped up Chuck D raps, *Warriors* samples and funk beats. You live in Australia, you grew up in the suburbs – you have been exposed to all of this stuff throughout your life. It will resonate, I assure you. Actually thinking about this further, I don't really think the sample choices are anomalies: chucking in something potentially embarrassing is one important part of Hip-Hop culture. It's how some of the more bizarre/interesting trends start up, and is probably one of the reasons Kool Keith remains the world's greatest MC. The better parts of the culture are all about anomalies, aiming to be unique through the mashing of the last 50 years, and picking out unexpected morsels for your own use. *Wax People* sounds pretty fucking raw too (another plus!), with the cover proudly proclaiming that Eddie uses only two turntables, a mixer, a basic Gemini 4-second sampler, and a four-track recorder. In addition, he's got cred too (sorry, this is pretty important to me in this context, I don't want to hear no shit from suckers who haven't paid their dues!): he's a former member of the early 90's San Francisco crew Bullet Proof Scratch Hamsters, one of the first groups to put out vinyl tailored strictly for the scratch DJ to use in battles. I'm still thinking about my use of the word anomaly: maybe Eddie Def is one because overindulgence in marijuana does not appear to have turned him into a fuckwit.

Divine Styler *Wordpower2: Directrix* CD [MoWax]
Jesus H. Christ, hear the wonderful sound of MoWax digging itself out of a considerable hole! I have very very vague recollections of a Rhyme Syndicate video I saw once on TV years ago, which I believe featured then-members Everlast (in hilariously retarded form, even more so than his recent solo outing) and the gentleman known as the Divine Styler (please correct me if I am wrong). To say he has moved on from these rather humble beginnings is an understatement; he's a serious contender for Kool Keith's crown as world's greatest MC these days. His instrumentation is on point too (he handles most duties himself), and in fact *Directrix* is a superior artifact musically than Keith's *Black Elvis* album. Sample sources are confounding and obtuse, creating a lo-fi electro-derived atmosphere on most cuts. I suspect science fiction cinema may have been plundered in some cases (I spot *Bladerunner*), verifying the electro association. In addition, Divine Styler's take on religiously inspired narrative is unspeakably weird (psychedelic even), so it is very easy to overlook the Moslem mumbo-jumbo and spiritual search-detailing lyrics. This is an indication of the central difference between this LP and the works of Kool Keith: Divine Styler is perhaps *slightly* more serious about his metaphysical concerns. But maybe not.

Alec Empire vs. Elvis Presley 12" [El Turco Loco]
My copy of this record was scratched the fuck up before I had even played it (thanks for nothing Big Star – not exactly a nice price either!), and at this point it pops all over the place, creating an extremely dirty, dirty sound (in many senses of the word). It often seems like the pulverizing beats are laying into poor old Elvis Aaron, and by crikey it sounds right on. Don't fork out for this record - it's piss funny once, but only particularly mean people will appreciate repeat listens. He's had enough! Let the poor scumbag rest! Just as good as the last Atari Teenage Riot record, if not better.

Farmers Manual *No Backup* CD reissue [Mego]
I missed this first time around, so I'm pleased to be given a second chance. Although not as much of a convention/reference point destroying exercise as the two albums that followed, *No Backup* still possesses quite a few 'what the fuck?' moments. The difference with this one seems to be in its 'arranged' nature, and the fact that the real weird shit is saved for the midway point onwards. Throughout, placement of sound appears more deliberate, as opposed to the soundfile collage of 1998's *Explorers_ We*. I guess the album in between, *FSCK*, occupied the middle ground, meaning it contained 'songlike' tracks, but also a huge number of tiny sounds (in terms of volume and length) at the end of the album that seemed inexplicable to me at the time. There I go, establishing my own reference points. The other thing that occurs to me is that while I don't think *Explorers_ We* could *ever* sound of a particular time, I can picture *No Backup* sounding dated in a few years, through the nature of the sounds (*particularly* the drum/percussion sounds) employed. This makes the album an earlier report from the research that eventually affected me greatly.

Fennesz *plus forty seven degrees 56' 37" minus sixteen degrees 51' 08"* CD [Touch]
A number of reasons why the artist should be commended on this release:
1.There are no 'tunes', man. It seemed to me that Mr. Fennesz was to be Mego's cash-cow 'pop' artist after hearing 1997's *Hotel Paral.lel*. That record was fucking great (beautiful, even), but seemed to make the fractured glitch explorations of the other label releases palatable to dipshit uni students reared on indie-shite. After all, you could hear bits of pretty guitar work, there were recognisable rhythms, and it was conceivable that young couples in thrift store shirts and corduroys could enjoy intimate moments with it as the soundtrack. This was in addition to the fact he had a video shown on *Alchemy*, and is a decidedly handsome chap by traditional standards (you know what I fucking mean). None of this is inherently wrong or bad (despite my loathing of the demographic described), but I'm nevertheless impressed that the follow-up could never be perceived and employed in the same way.
2. Nothing on this disc sounds like it came from a guitar. So therefore I want no further mention of the fact that Mr. Fennesz uses a guitar as a source of *some* (it was never 'all') of his sounds. That was always one of the things that sucked about the stuff I read about him – "wow, look at this artist using guitar in a fresh way" – fuck off!
3. Despite employing comparatively harsh sound, the sense of beauty created on the first album is still present. But this is of course a matter of perception – I don't expect this to be a common observation. Listening to this album through headphones is a phenomenal experience, with the best of the money-moments occurring at around 2:30 during track 4. Watch for it!

4. People I've shown this disc to seem more taken with the packaging than the contents of the CD. Fucking rad. Just like this Incapacitants tape I recently picked up (put out by the Betley Welcomes Careful Drivers label from the UK) which was encased in a tin foil food container full of lollipops. The tape itself contained stress-relief white noise right the way through.

All this sounds a bit exclusionary, a tad elitist perhaps? What if I told you I really enjoy pop music too (even The Smiths... even Radiohead! Not in an ironic sense either!), it's just that in this instance the fact Fennesz has (unwittingly)(hopefully!) alienated fans of his last album (who wouldn't normally touch anything remotely *unmusical* (in the guitar-based rock sense of the word)) appears to me a beautiful thing. What do you say? Do I make no sense?

Fennesz/O'Rourke/Rehberg *The Magic Sound of Fenn o' berg* CD [Mego]

You are given a nice cue in the form of a Chicks On Speed-executed collage cover that this is the most fun from Mego yet. While the distinctive sound of most Mego releases (i.e. Mac-processed, glitch-ridden and relatively rhythm-free electronics) remains throughout, there is perhaps a greater willingness to appropriate larger portions of other people's recorded music, and an intention to blatantly use sounds with hefty baggage. At least when I listen to it, I find myself identifying "jumpy cartoon music... classic hard rock guitar... sentimental film soundtrack..." placing the samples in neat little boxes. In most cases they are chopped up and processed to buggery, but there is a definite recognition/association process in evidence over here. I'm guessing this is a result of the involvement of Jim O'Rourke, who seems to carry on about these ideas in the press a lot. (You know I've never actually heard one of his records? Am I missing out? Do you want to know how much I don't care?) As for those around me, it seems the final track *Fenn o' berg Theme* is quite popular (because it centers on a gently drifting string based sample and has bits at the end that sound like Tie-Fighters I reckon), while the rest of the disc contains too much crap that sounds like a modem or fax machine. This is a useful observation, as I get the feeling *The Magic Sound of Fenn o' berg* may be described by some (i.e. people too immersed in the avant-garde) as 'pop' music. It is not. It is experimental shit with a sense of fun.

Grand Theft Auto II

The sequel to the all time classic is definitely as good as its predecessor and introduces a bit more depth into the story and characters. The game basically involves committing crimes in a city based 5 minutes into the future. These crimes almost always involve some sort of car theft followed by much copkilling and car chases. Pretty exciting stuff. Viewed from a top-down perspective the game plays like one of those "Greatest Police Chases" TV shows with you desperately doing anything to avoid capture by the police or being shot by rival gangs. The sequel introduces gangs to the game, as you now have to align yourself with any of the three gangs in each level. These gangs range from the Yakuza and the Zaibatsu Corporation through to bizarre gangs like the Hare Krishna's and the Rednecks. Usually by working for one gang you piss off the others and this brings in the added danger of being gunned down if you stray into the wrong territory. Likewise, if you stay in your territory you're given some protection from other gangs and the police. The police in this game are a lot smarter than the last lot. They work in pairs and hunt you down like the dog you are. If you commit enough crime they will call in SWAT teams, the FBI and even the army to catch you. All in all this game is fantastic, it kept me playing for weeks and it's open ended structure, as well as the great missions make this a game well worth purchasing.

www.gta2.com

Gummo OST CD [Domino]

Look this came out over a year ago, but I only got it a couple of months back, so shut up. It's compiled by someone who knows, man, so it has to be included. Maybe I could justify a review as a celebration of the fact *Gummo* is out on video. After countless recommendations, I checked it out over this past summer, and it instantly became an audiovisual bible. With the exception of the Electric Hellfire Club track (I can't think of any other reason for this to be here than to provide an indication of the popularity of Marilyn Manson style Goth Rock among mall dwellers) everything is on point. The Dark Noerd track kind of sucks because of the shoddy electronic rhythms, but it still works in context. The other slight disappointment is the fact that only an excerpt of Burzum's half-hour masterpiece *Rundgang um die transzendentale Säule der Singularität* is included, but this is no big deal – at least I now have a six minute version to put on mix tapes for friends. If you are unfamiliar with the works of world class idiot Varg Vikernes as Burzum, I regard this track as being his best, so start here for an overview. The bulk of the other material is pretty straightforward Metal fare, primarily of the old school variety; extra rad tracks from Bethlehem and godfathers Bathory being the best examples. Other popular sub-genres are also represented well, with skillfully executed stoner rock from Sleep and Eyehategod plus comedy metal from Spazz (who are *not* punk/hardcore despite what you might hear) and Brujeria. There's other stuff here too (a solo cello piece, weird shit from Destroy All Monsters and Namanax, and a brief piece of dialogue from the film itself) but you are not going to pick up this package for it, it is Metal you are after.

Hrvatski *Oiseaux 96/98* CD [Reckankreuzungsklankewerkzeuge]

Often I think that 'keeping up' with the latest developments in electronic music construction is a stupid, childish pursuit, favouring fucking trainspotter snobs or social climbers with the right connections. Too much of the music itself and the dialogue surrounding it seems focused on this as well. It REALLY seems to be missing the fucking point by million miles in my view. I don't give a fuck about the new ways people have found to chop up/process/reinterpret/mash/whatever the same fucking breakbeat. How does the stuff make me feel? Usually when the above focus is evident, it just makes me feel bad, like someone is looking at me with his or her tongue out (and diaper full of shit) squealing "Nya nya, look at what I can do!" – and you expect thirty of my hard earned dollars for that? Goodbye. It's the reason why in my view IDM sucks and dumbass digital hardcore fucking rules (generally speaking). Bearing this in mind, I approached *Oiseaux 96/98* with quite a deal of trepidation. When I read that it contained countless variations on the *Amen* break (and you know I've never heard the original track the break is from, so it's use means nothing besides the fact that the drums sound the same on a lot of drum and bass records) I wasn't brimming with enthusiasm. I gave it a chance though, and I'm glad I did – there's enough other stuff going on to infuse the material with genuine feeling (well, feelings other than that of amazement at the complexity of the arrangements). There's a Pink Floyd cover too (*Cirrus Minor*), which is really the capper – it's not 'quirky' (as the cover notes state) just a well realised idea that attacks the listener with unexpected (and very pleasurable) variation.

Immortal *At the Heart of Winter* CD [Osmose]

Apologies for starting on the cover art before the music, but a couple of priceless observations first off: The group has abandoned their previous genre typifying illegible logo in favour of a decidedly less groovy font. Presumably this has been done to make the group's records easier to identify among the countless indecipherable Black Metal record covers populating long hair listening emporiums worldwide. Secondly, the cover also features lots of choice photographs of the Immortal core duo, one half of which looks like he's struggling to fit into his revealing spiky leather duds and bullet belt. You've got to love it. Immortal seem to be particularly popular among both deadly serious Metal obsessives and annoying ironists alike (I would like to think I fall somewhere in the middle), which is interesting, but not inexplicable. They have a pretty cool name, they look the part, they have the cred, and the music is pretty much gold all the time. They share a lot of common ground with Emperor, in that they occasionally slow the pace to include some clean guitar strumming, riffage in the fast sections is of a similar pace, and each track is very lengthy, usually containing a number of different 'movements'. Vocal delivery differs somewhat though (less screech, no actual singing), and the lyrics indicate a less firm grip on the English language ('frostage' and 'winterized' aren't actual words, are they? Who am I to talk, I've just used the word 'riffage'!). Why don't they just forget English and use the language of their homeland (ala Burzum)? Regardless, they still manage a few gems, the best of which has to be "the longer we ride the stronger we stride". Apparently they already have a new album coming out, so maybe you should wait a little before turning on to Immortal.

Invisibl Skratch Piklz (DJ Q-Bert vs. D-Styles) *Hot Sauce In The Dick Hole* CD [Mom'n'Dad]

It's one of those things you know you are going to love before you hear the fuckin' thing. The cover art (here I go again) features a big spiky punk-rock leather jacket with a circular-framed graffiti piece on the back, and it's on a label most well known for its reissues of early Hanatarash material. In actuality it is likely that if you have heard Skratch Piklz material before (particularly the stuff from their radio shows or mix tapes), you will be familiar with most of the stuff found within this disc (the CD itself designed to look like a vinyl record, which would be a funny idea if Pearl Jam hadn't used it years ago – actually maybe that's why it *is* funny...). The routines and treatments sound quite familiar, but it's good to have them all documented on a CD instead of a crappy C90. That is essentially what this package is - an ISP mix tape transferred to CD. In other words, none too shabby turntable-focused Hip-Hop from the best in the business.

Kettle S/T CDR
A report I received in the post from Andrew Kettle, Brisbane resident, sound artist, and announcer/programmer of 4ZZZ fm program *Atmospheric Disturbances* (see ad elsewhere in this issue). All pieces included are accompanied by extensive notes, relating to recording information and function, and are grouped accordingly. However other than the exploration of sound, and a digitally processed undercurrent, there is little common thread among the various groupings: all pieces were constructed for different reasons, using different sound sources, and therefore the results are different to one another. I guess the easiest descriptive point I could make (in comparison with most of the other stuff featured in this issue) is that there is nothing here approaching a song – at least not in the traditional sense of the word. It's more about 'here's what I've been up to over the last couple of years exploring sound using digital means'. I'm not really big on reading extensive liner notes (oh hell, I'll admit it – I'm not that big on reading *any* huge slab of text), so naturally my focus is on the way the disc sounds when I stick it in my stereo after a nice dinner (pasta it was this evening). I'd say the headphone recommendation (one of the bits of text that jumped out on initial inspection) is a good idea for portions of the disc, particularly the droning stuff that occupies most of the recordings. There are sections that are pretty damn harsh though (falling under the headings of 'micro tracks' and 'beautiful noise'!) so be careful.

KID 606 *Kid 606 and Friends Vol.1* CD [Tigerbeat6]
It's fucking great to hear electronic music that is aggressively (desperately!) pumping with life, yet devoid of pretentious self-importance. That said, the inner-circle/networking aspects of this remix party suck dick in a big way, but at least the music affords the listener enough fun to ignore the less commendable messages being sent out. Someone manages to pull out an all too obvious NWA sample in among the breakbeat fuckery and squelchy electronics also, melting my 'if this is your approach, then come on and impress me, boffins' mindset. After listening the whole way through, the bad vibes that I picked up initially gradually dispersed – this is actually a pretty disparate group of individuals, not a closed clique. Take these three remixers/remixees (?) for example: The Rapture, tight pants wearing no-wavers, The Sinking Body, an offshoot of arch-weirdoes Men's Recovery Project, and Aube, noise-to-order fiend from Japan. Nothing too incestuous/exclusionary going on there.

Kool Keith *Black Elvis/Lost in Space* CD [Ruffhouse/Columbia]
Using a pisspants-funny 'Black Elvis' persona this time around, Kool Keith seems to spend much of his time accusing others of biting ideas he initiated, and in most instances (and despite his apparently less than stable mental well being) I agree with his claims one hundred percent. He is seriously one of the few MCs around whose work actually justifies his rather egotistical approach to lyrics. Combine this with the fact that his shit is the funniest around my a mile (yeah, even more yuks per track than Puffy, and unlike Mr. Daddy/Combs/whatever, it's not because what he is doing is so unbelievably shitty) – you don't need to investigate much further than this to obtain the cream of Hip-Hop today. The best part is that after a considerable drought, Keith has been particularly productive of late, pumping out both *First Come, First Served* (on his own Funky Ass Records label) as Dr. Dooom (yet another alter-ego) and this major label LP in quick succession. I hope the Sun Ra comparison on the cover promo sticker (Sun Ra - Jazz, Kool Keith - Rap etc. - a quote from *Rolling Stone*, mind you) may also be employed in terms of output, because I will never tire of this man's genius. Hip-Hop by a genuine eccentric who also happens to be the best MC in the world. Easily.

Maldoror *She* CD [Ipecac]
Well, this one sounds pretty much exactly as I thought it would. Big fuck off distortion-noise with silly screaming over the top of it. It all looks pretty lowbrow too, in keeping with the filthy obsessions of the two fiends involved. In relation to Akita's impressive body of work, there's a little more playfulness to be found here than usual. I saw the word *giddy* used somewhere in relation to *She*, and that is absolutely *spot on* – so at least they sound like they are enjoying themselves! Also slightly out of character, but not *that far out* considering his recent mulching of free jazz, rhythms appear constructed by Akita using his arsenal of delay pedals – so not just implied rhythm this time around. Patton does just as you would expect him to (provided you've bothered to hear what he has been up to since he left fucking Faith No More): he screams an awful lot (and frankly only Yamantaka Eye is better at it), and chucks in silly splutters, coughs and yelps, plus some super dumb Warner Bros. style cartoon sound effects and theremin squeals. Yeah, and it is harsh by *almost* anyone's standards, so it is pleasing to note that freakish Patton obsessives will probably shit their pants listening to this in their local alt. rock super-mark-up shithole (Verandah Music in Adelaide, come on down!), wondering why Mr. Patton refuses to make material that kicks like System Of A Down, dude. It is also possible that a few more copies of the Merzbox will be shifted to rich homes as a result of superhunk Patton's involvement with Akita-San. That's reason enough for approval in my book kids.

Material *Intonarumori* CD [Axiom]
It's just not the way to present Hip-Hop, I'm sure. You don't put out a record with 'Rap Is Still an Art' printed in big letters on the interior cover – rap doesn't give a fuck if it is 'art' or not! Totally beside the point! So far as the tracks themselves go, nothing here is too po-faced, but I think the overall concept and presentation definitely is. Maybe Bill Laswell is to blame, as I've seen this kind of embarrassing stuff popping up previously on Axiom releases. It's like he's trying to place the best bits of Hip-Hop culture in a high art context, when it is much more affecting and powerful out there on the streets, man, not in some avant garde ghetto (heh heh... I better shut up I think). Anyway, Laswell knows his shit despite his pretensions (Ramellzee and DXT are in attendance, as well as some of the San Francisco turntable fiends), so *Intonarumori* is basically a really good Hip-Hop mix tape on CD. Special mention has got to go to Wu-Tang affiliate Killah Priest, whose 6 minute beatless paranoia-flow on *Temple of the Mental* is just amazing, and Scotty Hard's *Checkpoint 0.1*, a slurred distortion ridden rap (*without* rhyme!) giving an eyewitness account of the return of a gangster to the streets. This is pretty great, but Laswell could learn a thing or two from the labels most of these artists are drawn from.

Melt Banana *MxBx 1998/13000 Miles at Light Velocity* CD [Tzadik]
Billy Blanks should commission Melt Banana to do the soundtrack for a Tae-Bo home video. This suggestion should provide an indication of their sound: Hardcore (as in the Bad Brains) derived speedy thrashing with a drop of Naked City cut and chop. You feel pretty idiotic sitting down listening to this stuff; it really does demand some sort of movement. The fact that this is a live recording just reinforces this point, because it is crystal clear these kids can cut the mustard in the here and now. I remember reading articles about the Boredoms during my teenage years (when I was still more interested in Anthrax and the Earache roster), and based on the descriptions I read, this is pretty much exactly how I thought they would sound. When I finally sent fucking AUS $50 or something to Japan Overseas for a copy of *Pop Tatari*, I was a little disappointed – although the tone and mania I expected (and wanted!) was present, the changes weren't as tight and speedy as I had hoped. Things sounded much more ramshackle than *Torture Garden* by Naked City (the only material featuring Eye I had heard by that point), and for a kid bred on Thrash Metal, that was just sub-par. Of course, the record grew on me like a skin infection, and I was soon wasting whatever cash I came across on increasingly obscure noise. What an idiot. All of this suggests that Melt Banana sound a little dated, but I want to make it clear that this is simply not the case – this album sounds so much more vital than any backwards-looking modern Hardcore you care to mention – and in my company you would be advised to mention nothing of the sort. Slayer did it years ago you pillock, so fuck off.

The Melvins *The Maggot* CD [Ipecac]
What is with the mix-tape disabling PQ points on this CD? Fucking Wankers! Each song occupies 2 tracks on the CD, the second one usually starting randomly in the middle of a song. What a great idea. For $30+ I expect to be able to do whatever I damn well please with the music on the disc! As a general rule, I don't really enjoy the Melvins when they play really slow. I know this is what they are known for, but just like all 'sludge' bands (Eyehategod being another good example) the slow sections are really just buildups to the rockin' fast bits. This is why the first track here *Amazon* is pretty much the best thing I've heard from them, and why I haven't shelled out for the second (more 'experimental') disc in this 'Ipecac trilogy', *The Bootlicker*. It's all well and good that they are prepared to spend lots of time on amp hiss explorations and drone building, but it's not really what I came here for. I want big riffs that try to tear you a new orifice, and a menacing atmosphere. It does happen here quite a bit, and sometimes even when they are moving slowly there is enough thirst for blood to get my own juices (of the red variety I mean) pumping. I may be giving away my distinct lack of knowledge when it comes to guitar rock pre-1980, but for some reason big chunks of this album (in fact all the bits that *aren't* fast and pounding) remind me a whole lot of Led Zeppelin. With a song title like *The Green Manalishi (With the Two Pronged Crown)* I guess I shouldn't be surprised. They're doing their own thing, so god bless 'em...

The Melvins *The Crybaby* CD [Ipecac]
The final disc in the Ipecac 'trilogy' (you should probably imagine that being pronounced the way Nigel Tufnell does in *Spinal Tap*), this time bringing in a host of alt. (cock)rock celebs and other more left-of-center collaborators to do their thing with The Melvins' bits and pieces. The results are not always riveting stuff, but the bits that do work well are genuine surprises. The best of these is of course Leif Garret's fucking awesome version of *Smells Like Teen Spirit* (no shit) which is basically a straight ahead duplicate of the original music with Bryan Adams/Sting style vocals instead of Cobain's dumbfuck angst over the top. Totally fucking rad, and a huge gob of spit in the face of everything. Things can only go downhill from there, but there are a few nice stops along the way. David Yow manages to be something other than annoying (an achievement!) on his two contributions (one with some unknown quantity called Godzik Pink in tow), and a high level of beer fueled aggression is attained (he does swear pretty well). Hank Williams III (with Helmet's Henry Bogdan) turns in faithful versions of *Ramblin' Man* and *Okie From Muskogee* which are only notable because the Melvins are playing *trad-country* on them. Other than that the track featuring Bliss Blood (formerly of the Pain Teens) sounds pretty creepy in an attractive fashion, and everything else sucks. You know, some of the people involved here should be despised, not embraced. Yes Tool that means you.

The Monks *Five Upstart Americans* CD reissue [Omplatten]
Please don't make give a brief synopsis of The Monks' story to provide background! Arrrgh! It's all on the fucking Internet, so track it down. The description of this CD and *Black Monk Time* (the other currently available reissue) at www.forcedexposure.com are a good place to start. Alright then, here's one sentence: after three years spent protecting the west from Communism, five American GIs go off the deep end following their discharge and start playing beat music throughout Germany (fueled by amphetamines) dressed as monks (surprise surprise). Oh and I guess I should mention they were a bit more aggressive than their contemporaries, and came close to inventing punk. Of course the music doesn't sound 'hard' to me, but you know, I can see how this must have seemed pretty fucked up in 1965. Endorsements from the likes of John Spencer and Henry Rollins kind of sour my enjoyment of *Five Upstart Americans*, but its good to know that this story is being heard, no matter whose stinking mouth it comes from.

Mouse On Mars *Niun Niggung* CD [Sonig/Rough Trade]
Yes yes, very cute. Despite cover depictions of humanity's decline (executed to look like EC Comics from the 50s randomly subjected to the ravages of Photoshop filters... with a monkey chucked on top) everything here sounds pleasingly optimistic, utopian perhaps. Even the most moody, choppy, racy piece here, *Distroia*, still carries with it a windows down on the Great Ocean Road lightness. Maybe this is all just because I am hearing this stuff in comparison to altogether more cathartic works, but I'm seeing cartoon characters at the disco here. That's just fine though, I mean, I fuckin' love this stuff, but it seems a little out of step with the statements I've read from the folks involved of late – maybe I've just misinterpreted? Anyway, after a few months with the disc, the crowning glory remains opener *Download Sofist*, which is possibly the world's most accurate aural depiction of a sweeping sunrise bringing with it the promise of a great day. Naturally enough, nothing following quite reaches this peak, although much of it is like a continuation of the atmosphere established in that first piece. Throughout I find myself wondering just what it is that makes this groups' sound so damn unique – there is a clear, rich complexity to be found here in abundance, along with a steady rhythm that usually bounces along contentedly. Sounds appear from nowhere, and seem completely alien (sound sources are extremely hard to pin down precisely here), although they are not that far off some which are *very* familiar. There is an atmosphere always present though, and it is this I am concerned with – "here is the way we think things should be", it seems to say – or maybe "here is the way things could be" – and this is not just intended in relation to music. It seems to be a statement about life in general, and that fits in perfectly with the claims made by the artists, so I hereby retract my earlier proclamation!

One of One *Snapshots in Sound* CD [Dish Recordings]
Unearthed recordings of Americans made using machines designed to simultaneously record and press a 45 rpm slab of vinyl as the 'customer' did their thing (and by crikey, that infinitely broad term is genuinely being stretched here!) into a microphone (primarily using a device called a Recordio-Gram). A large part of the appeal of this CD for me surrounds the joy of laughing at the hokey/ignorant/insane ideas Americans entertained earlier this century (well, they are still doing it today, but you know what I mean... in this context they seem a little less threatening!). In fact the very idea of the technology featured here is one of the best examples of this, but it is the way some of these people have chosen to use it that is especially deranged. I am struck by the high level of paranoia to be found here, bubbling under a surface of certainty, confidence, and optimism. For every young buck nervously sending a message of love to his sweetheart, there is a disturbing, obsessed (yet clearly enunciated) rant about the wonders of food. This disc is part of a growing canon of secret 20th Century American history.

Peccatum *Strangling from Within* CD [Candlelight]
You must have read one of my mentions of Emperor by now. This group consists of Emperor frontman Ihsahn (playing all instruments and singing), his partner Ihriel (on vocals) and her brother Lord PZ, also contributing vocals. Like Dark Throne, they too have a cover proclamation: "Peccatum performs art for the sake of art". Alrighty then. By no means as powerful as Emperor, this album is pretty silly, like the three involved decided to make some really scary gothic stuff, man. All of the music sounds like it came from some crappy synth rack (drums included), and the vocals are just fucking hilarious, dominated by growling, Norse God bellows and Kate Bush style wailing. A friend likened sections to Bauhaus, and that is pretty spot on for the bits that are not strictly 'metal'. It all has the air of immense self-importance and grandeur, like this is some really heavy shit being said here, dude. But what the hey, I picked it up for $8 from the CC Records at Tea Tree Plaza in Adelaide, and I've gotten a few good spins out of it. Now maybe I too can 'breathe without access to air'...

Pimmon *Waves and Particles* CD [Meme]
Whoa, calm down there partner! For some reason I put this on expecting something in line with the Sigma Editions releases I have heard, but in retrospect I don't know why – surely not because they are both Sydney based (at present)? Anyway *Waves and Particles* kicks off sounding like something going very wrong in a noisy way, which is definitely a good thing - the first repeated loop seems impatient, wanting to tell everyone that it has arrived. However soon enough you are allowed to relax, with some nice calming loops coming into play by the second track. Lots of little bits and pieces are allowed to go about their business, keeping themselves occupied around the place while we listen in intently. It really does sound like an electronic interpretation of insect and animal sounds to me: crickets, frogs, birdcalls... it's all there, but perhaps unintentionally I suspect. They are the 'particles' of the title I guess, while the 'waves' are the loops that spring forward from the background clutter. There is definitely a slightly different musical ethic being pursued here than much of the abstract/cracked electronics I hear floating around. Lots of the stuff from related artists (well, other people fooling around with laptops) seems to generate a strong monotonal quality when albums are taken as a whole, possibly to give them a sense of character, to separate themselves from those around. As this is a developing area (yes, it really is experimental) I guess it is perfectly understandable. Although already commonplace in some senses, in others (d.i.y.) music produced using software processing (in most cases only involving the 'music industry' at the mastering stage) is still in its infancy – take the live context for example – it ain't there just yet I think. This said, there is a wide variety of sounds to be found here, and it does make it difficult to pin down the artist, at least to an extent. After the ten or so listens I've enjoyed, could I actually identify it in an 'Invisible Jukebox' scenario? I'm not sure. And it doesn't matter.

Pita *Get Out* CD [Mego]
Ow! Another harsh beginning! This one sounding like it's coming straight from a Marshall – the feedback has a very warm analogue feel to it, although everything has clearly been put through the digital blender. It's a good thing this disc will wind up next to Pimmon's here, as the artists share considerable common ground. There is an important distinction to be made though, as this disc contains what I believe to be Mego's finest moment so far, the untitled third piece. Unlike Pimmon's work, the track is based around an obviously pilfered association-loaded loop that carries unquestionably warm, sentimental, and loving feelings for me, probably a result of years of watching films and TV in this instance. The loop is allowed to run unfettered for a brief while, before being blasted in an instant with all manner of distortion filters. This goes on for eleven fucking amazing minutes, never for a moment becoming dull. The funny thing is that I have actually fallen asleep to this track despite its surface harshness – the feeling at its core remains despite the processing. It's possible the blasting even adds to the effect. The rest of the disc kind of does its thing, never reaching the peaks of the third track, instead jolting the listener with noise and silence, forced to sit next to one another at the front of the class. It all sounds very precise though, leaving the impression of high levels of contemplation and preparation.

Plan 10 Concepts CD [self released]
Not too sure if I got the title correct – I can't find a name for the actual CD (as opposed to the artist) on the package or accompanying notes. Anyway, this appears to be the first CD release from a mysterious (at least to me) Melbourne entity concerned primarily with deconstructive ambient sound. Yet again it possesses a strong air of digital processing, with a lot of 'thick air' floating around at all times. The accompanying notes I received with this CD speak of a resistance to passive mainstream music, but I'm uncertain that there is much here that really grabs the listener and promotes a proactive approach to listening. Well, that's not strictly true – the tenth track starts out with a flurry of activity before fading quickly into almost an hour of total silence. This of course promotes an active approach to listening – I walked over to the stereo and hit the fast forward button. It's a simple and amusing prank (if that's what it is), and possibly a bit of a middle digit to certain other electronic composers – but I'm not sure of this. Naturally enough, after an hour of silence the last track is pretty affecting with its processed animal sounds, but then any sound would carry an impact after that much silence. If you are in Melbourne shortly (like right now!) you should probably check out the exhibition @Synaesthesia (see contacts) for a more all-encompassing introduction to this artist's work. Otherwise try this CD.

Primal Scream *Exterminator* CD [Creation/Sony]
Despite 'destroying from within' fantasies, I think it would be pretty ignorant to consider yourself an anarchist while working for Sony, let alone while maintaining a hefty drug habit. I always kind of despised Primal Scream and their ilk as a teen, especially after I saw them play at one of the Big Day Out festivals I attended while still fascinated by the likes of Ministry (yet more 'establishment destroyers' who managed to suck up Sydney's entire supply of heroin during their tour). They seemed so limp and fucked up, like they didn't really care about what they were doing one iota – Bobby Gillespie being the worst offender with that embarrassing hand clap dance he seemed so fond of at the time. Thinking back now, I make a connection between this observation and an article I read about Alec Empire once, wherein he spoke of young people fucking themselves up on drugs to the extent that they bring down the government through the creation of an unsustainable welfare state. I don't think the brain surgeons of Primal Scream had this in mind though. Fortunately they have changed at least a little since, and are now making great records despite remaining world class pretentious prats. They fit perfectly into a particular strain of British popular culture today, the kind documented with first hand accuracy by fellow asshole Irvine Welsh, and it is pretty entertaining to me, as there are definitely elements of it present here in Melbourne. A drug soaked environment, rich multiculturalism, and artistic disparity taking in everything from guitar chug to Hip-Hop to techno. The really surprising thing is that they manage to pull all this off so well (genre clashing not really having a shining history), and I think it may well be a result of not being too heavy handed about these influences. The 'I don't give a shit' attitude that annoyed me so much as a teen has actually paid off here. The only time things dip throughout the whole album is when Booby Gillespie attempts some rather ill advised rapping on the otherwise brilliantly psychotic 'Pills'. Now that I have had sufficient time to digest, I believe there are three really key tracks to be found here, each occupying very different ground. Second track *Accelerator* is a commendable excursion into maximum distortion, reducing drum sounds to treble heavy spraying thuds underneath shitstorm guitars and exhorting vocals. Later on comes *Swastika Eyes* (I prefer the Jagz Kooner mix to the Chemical Brothers' version) the one track I heard before buying the album, and probably the best thing the group has done to date (sorry, I haven't heard *Screamadelica*). The expertly executed ecstatic buildups leading into the choruses have been superbly appropriated from house music, or maybe even disco – it reminds me of a darker *Mighty Real* by Sylvester! *Keep Your Dreams* is the other side of the coin: sedate, warm, reassuring. I like this album, not the group who made it.

Quannum *Spectrum* CD [Quannum/MoWax]
This all seems pretty out of step with current rap conventions, and is absolutely essential as a result. The easiest way to write about *Quannum Spectrum* is in relation to the culture that surrounds it, and how it differs. While these days recognizing and reinterpreting the 'old school' is commonplace (and in fact its time seems to have past, paving the way for a revival of a revival in like 2003 or something) this crew explores techniques left dormant by the masses. There is a predominance here of the kind of group routines developed by heads like the Cold Crush Brothers, Double Trouble and the Fantastic Freaks, documented in 1983's *Wild Style*. Rhyming in unison, chanted chorus, rhymes *about rhyming* - all the good stuff. There is also a clear appreciation among the crew for old funk and soul, but it is employed in an altogether more earthy way to the mega producers of today. Tracks such as *People Like Me*, featuring amazing vocalist Joyo Velarde, sound absolutely contemporary, but after a while you realise this music could have come from anytime in the last thirty years! Only until some deckwork appears though, meaning it could only have come from the last twenty, heh heh. All this creates the impression that the album is concerned primarily with dredging up the past, and it's a little worrying to consider the reason I keep referring back. It just seems so damn authentic compared to much modern day Hip-Hop, as authentic as those old records I've heard. That's the connection, and it says something not so positive about my view of rap (not Hip-Hop) today.

***Santa Pod* CD [Ash International]**
If anyone is interested in doing a cover of Motley Crue's *Kickstart My Heart*, here is the best source available for those drag racer sounds. It is funny when you hear somebody say "Jesus Christ!" after one particularly startling blast near the beginning of the CD, but overall I don't really know why they bothered with the racetrack announcements. An hour or so of straight engine roar would have been much more enjoyable. Cut to the chase!

Schizoid *Enough Is Enough!* CDR [D-Trash/Generation Fuck You Recordings]
An example of the D-Trash label mentioned in the Evan Smith interview. I find it pleasing to know that stuff like this is being produced knocking much of the music industry (recording, mastering, pressing and distribution specifically) out of the loop, but the end product in this instance isn't something I would want to listen to that often. Some of the MP3s I've downloaded from this label have been really great (try the likes of DJ Rabies (or Cassandra Data Kill) and CPU War for good shit) but this disc seems a little bit cobbled together and well, immature. I can't tell you how much I like the idea of kids producing this stuff, but an unfortunate side effect of increased access to the means of getting your music out to others is that the overall level of quality will drop. You can't like everything out there, and the more of it there is, the more chance there is of you encountering something you don't like. There is also the fact that teenagers have a tendency to get a bit carried away with things, especially if they think there is some great wrong being committed. Well we all know there is (yeah we all know there are countless injustices being committed every day), but the way to do something about it should be to do things yourself, your way (which these folks do) cutting the bad stuff out, or acting directly – not spouting ineffectual punker lyrics about revolution and smashing the state. I'm still tired of it after two years of avoiding it (Atari Teenage Riot's silliness notwithstanding). On occasions things do gel together nicely here, when the bass squelches and distortion ridden samples complement each other, but the vocals are getting a bit too close to baggy pants and dreadlocks territory for my liking. Please get on the Internet and try a few different things from the label out.

Schoolly D *Say It Loud, I Love Rap, and I'm Proud* CD [Vinyl Resurrection]
My god, I don't think I've ever heard so many sources of samples on one CD. Schoolly D has been pilfered by just about every Hip-Hop producer in existence it seems, with only the likes of James Brown and George Clinton sampled more often. Uncompromising is definitely the word, as the stuff featured here attempts no bridges with other musical genres – it is 'pure' Hip-Hop with little soul, rock or funk influence. It sounds mechanical, minimal, raw, and macho (with a hilarious sleeve photograph of Schoolly D and DJ Code Money shaking hands the B-Boy way to confirm this). It's kind of funny, but the closest musical allegory I can draw is to *Licensed to Ill* era Beastie Boys. This does kind of make sense though – they are both products of the mid 80s (around '86 to pinpoint), post Sugarhill but pre Public Enemy. I'm referring to the Beastie Boys tracks that *did not* sample Led Zeppelin, or feature Kerry King solos: *Paul Revere*, *Hold It Now, Hit It*, and *Slow and Low*. It's cool that you also hear the lads separating themselves from Run DMC who they believe play rock – the best (and most obvious) example being *Don't Like Rock 'n' Roll*. It's all pretty stupid (a fact confirmed by the dumbass homophobia of some of Schoolly's statements in the interview contained in this package, equating long hair with homosexuality?) but that doesn't mean that the listener must be also to find the music awesome and entertaining.

Sensational *Corner the Market* CD [WordSound]
Yet another individual who has managed to avoid the weed use = everything you do turns to shit equation. He must be working from the fine example set by countless dub producers, not the model established by Cypress Hill. Actually the dub comparison is pretty spot on in many

respects, as I approach this album the same way I do the Trojan and Blood and Fire reissues I have. Like the dub/reggae artists I have checked out, I really don't share any common ground with Sensational, I mean, I can't relate to what he is saying or anything (I like beer, not weed!), but I really enjoy listening in. There is a wired, dusted brain at work here, one that has decided to remove itself entirely from the concerns of the masses (an attempt to reinvent after past associations with the Jungle Brothers perhaps?). Because of the super raw recording quality and indecipherable lyrics, it does end up feeling like the music was made purely to entertain this kid and his friends, but staggeringly it also lights my fire over here in Australia. A large part of the appeal lies in the humour lying down slap bang in the middle of the room, chuckling to itself in a smoke induced haze. You can't help but laugh; you're listening to a track called *Excellence Makes Wack Irrelevant* for fuck's sake. The production is suitably oblique, with vocals pushed way into the foreground and the ultra minimal beats allowed to go about their business, started up and run through until the tape is stopped. Tape hiss is evident, spitting on the ground in front of Timbaland's studio while Sensational walks by on his way to do something more interesting than overproduce.

The Sims
The Sims. A weird little game which involves running (or ruining) the lives of simulated people on the computer. You start by creating a character and setting their characteristics. When this has been decided you build it a house and away you go. It needs looking after and has eight 'needs' which you must satisfy in order for your Sim to get ahead. This is done by making sure they eat, bathe, socialise, have fun, etc. All of this goes towards making the Sim get a job and become proficient at it which earns them more money which you can spend on luxuries or better baths, toilets, houses etc. Sounds pretty mundane and boring. Wrong, this damn game played havoc with my social life for over a week. It's annoyingly addictive and even though you spend most of the time doing boring stuff like going to the toilet it's fascinating watching the life of this simulated person unfold in front of your eyes. Watch them as they get married and have kids, fight with the neighbors, unwittingly burn their house down and skinny dip in the hot tub (nudity fans be warned, all of the 'good' bits are blurred out). Anyway I'm going back to the game; James' affairs need sorting out....
www.thesims.com

SSAB Songs CD [Omplatten]
Let's see if I can do a review without mentioning Harmony Korine. Nope. Sorry, I'm having visions of Keanu Reeves and Dogstar. It isn't the same though, SSAB Songs is so fucking good, and Korine is a bit of a favorite around this way, so I don't really give a shit that the reason I actually forked out for this disc is because of Korine's involvement (not strictly true! I also have a bit of a label fetish happening with Omplatten at the moment too). It's interesting to note that this material is closely related to *Gummo* - word is that bits and pieces of SSAB show up in the film, but I'm yet to spot them in my rough as guts dubbed copy. It fits perfectly though: when it doesn't sound like some kids strumming their parents shitty acoustic guitar and banging on rusty pots and pans, it sounds like found home recordings of hillbillies. If you've seen the film, you will understand the relationship. The description I've just made makes the CD sound less than it is – the bits and pieces brought together here are arranged expertly, and carry a real sense of tarnished beauty about them.

System Shock II
Have you ever felt scared playing a computer game? I can distinctly remember feeling that way playing a game five or so years ago called System Shock. Now System Shock II has come out and can it succeed in doing the same thing twice? The answer is hell yeah! Based in the future, SS2 is the story of the USS Rickenbacker and it's maiden voyage to Alpha Centauri. After years of training in the Military you wake up on board the Rickenbacker after hypersleep to find something is terribly wrong. The crew of the ship is all but wiped out and your body has been cybernetically enhanced by an unknown source. Responding to a call from the ships doctor, you set about finding out what's wrong. Without giving away too much of the story, SHODAN, the protagonist from the original game is back though I still haven't discovered how and why yet. The atmosphere created by the game is overwhelming. The sound effects are used to the full extent as you run around the ship desperately avoiding hybrids and other creatures that make your life a living hell. Their moans and taunts are enough to put you over the edge and prolonged gaming sessions are impossible as within 5 minutes of playing the game you're sweating profusely and you feel the urge to check your underpants. This game is fantastic and easily the best I have played for some time. Do yourself a favour, get rid of Scream and its followers and get into this.
www.systemshock2.com

Trey 12" [Tapastry Toons/Mother Tongues]
Another strain of Australian Hip-Hop, perhaps more immersed in the existent community than the groups I normally enjoy. It's OK though – this simply means Trey is not as much of an outsider as the likes of Curse Ov Dialect. For me the lyrics and delivery are the focus here, as musically things are quite orthodox – it floats on by very nicely, but there isn't much that really leaps forward and demands attention. I understand that the sort of qualities I look for in Hip-Hop are hardly considered integral by most, as they are almost guaranteed to alienate many (Noise? Dirty production? Psychedelic influence? Who the fuck cares about this?) But you know, I would like to see some stretching, some real experimentation. Perhaps cultural context is the key here. Second track 'Bridge 2 Bridge' does employ some interesting loops however, and I guess in relation to many of Trey's peers, this stuff is up there with the best on offer today. Different artists are faced with varying issues to consider within their art; culture and community play a role here, and there are other motivations here beyond mere musical experimentation. The fact that this works as good pop music is one of its finest qualities, as it is art the target market of pop music could benefit from hearing in my view. This is primarily because the rhymes deal with a life young urban Australians can easily relate to, and therefore it is conceivable that it could provide new possibilities.

V/A *Blank Tapes CD Sampler* CDR [Blank Tapes]
Once again, this is probably the best distillation of Adelaide today available. It doesn't feature everything going on in the city - in fact, it only includes what I see as being a pretty close knit group of friends – but that's Adelaide all right. So let's get started... on a negative. You know I really hate acoustic guitar troubadours singing us their earthy songs about the little things in life, so there are a few bits and pieces here that I will never, ever listen to again. I don't care if they have a sense of humour either, as it always comes off sounding excruciatingly twee (uni student irony? No thanks!), or even worse, like the work of a HIPPY (and hippies are *always* liars hiding their true motivations). This means that as a rough rule I love everything here except for the bits that sound like bedroom strummers or people who play at the fucking Exeter. The Home for the Def opener *Victimless Crime* absolutely rules, and is possibly Nigel Koop's best attempt at rap yet. Same goes for Chong DMC's *Oh Yes*, which is gloriously offensive slow breakbeat retardation. And despite the use of a guitar, Jon Dale's piece (as Rhizome) manages to maintain interest through the deployment of sounds that do not appear to have been (exclusively) generated by plucking strings (or strumming chords). Sounds to me like the ideas I saw Keith Rowe demonstrating at What Is Music? filtered through an indie pop sensibility. Erm, maybe. There's quite a bit of both digital and analogue sound fuckery elsewhere, and to be honest I can really take it or leave it. It doesn't really provoke any reaction, negative or positive, just drifts on by. Lo-fi tape collage is simply not going to get me excited these days, but you know, sometimes something bland is needed – hell I still occasionally put Tortoise records on when I'm cooking. Oh Christ and here's an exception to one of my rules – The Home for the Def Big Bands' version of the Rolling Stones' *Wild Horses* which finishes things off nicely and bizarrely seems to have been produced using acoustic guitar and piano! Forget everything I said!

V/A *Collision Course* CD [Pias]
'Extreme Frequencies' states the warning on the cover (actually, the whole cover looks like one big warning!) of the best compilation to appear for ages. The common ground here is an elusive beast: there is an undercurrent of aggression, a pursuit of agitation via noise, and an appreciation of the beat. Hip-Hop appears and reappears, although it is the breakbeat (or the broken beat) that is always present, albeit in countless different guises. Never descending into an exclusionary clique or intellectual no fun zone, there is abundant energy here that anyone can access. Even when the frequencies get really fucked up (witness the DJ Scud/Nomex corker *Total Destruction*) it sounds like an affirmation of life rather than a misanthropic assault. Naturally enough, while I enjoy the slower chug of Rubberoom, Sensational and the Anti Pop Consortium, it is the more racy beats that demand repeat listens. Biomuse's *Socially Bankrupt* and Alec Empire's take on Ice track *Trapped In 3D* are both fucking brutal, moving at the kind of speeds I normally associate with metal. The rhymes by El-P of Company Flow on the Ice track have to be some of the best so far this year – that line "50 years later, everybody wanna hold hands with Hitler" gets me every time in the way Public Enemy once did. This sounds much more like a product of the streets than the stuff I actually hear on the streets here in

Melbourne. Weird – I hope this does not mean that it is a fantasy of what I wish it sounded like around here.

V/A *Consumer Productions 1999* CD [Consumer Productions]
The Tasmanian equivalent of the Blank Tapes CD? Yes, in the sense that much of the material here is resolutely Lo-fi, and seems to swing between explorations into familiar noise/drone and freaked guitar pop. Everything sounds a bit druggier though, or soaked in something, anyway – Isolation, or cold weather perhaps? The reason I say this is because the best parts of this material are genuinely psychedelic: Page 27, Silent Ink, Tom Salvador Egg and Tim Townsend all contributing pieces that sound fucking eerie, often combining association rich sounds with unidentifiable, mysterious tones. I'm sorry that I seem so eager to view this music as some report from a distant outpost (its only *Tasmania*, for fuck's sake) but this is how it works for me, and how I think it could be brought to the attention of a wider audience. While I'm writing this, the Tom Salvador Egg track is playing through, and I can't believe how struck I am by it. I know what all these sounds are – piano, rain, feedback, but holy shit, it sure does work well. Nothing too earth shattering mind you, but genuinely affecting in my room right now. Top job sir – I *pray* you are not a Goth.

V/A *NCL Trax v1.0* 2CD [Bloody Fist]
Bringing out the yob in everyone better than fucking AC/DC. There can be no question of the fact that this material appeals to exactly the same bits of me as Slayer. It pounds at breakneck speed, it is gloriously disrespectful of so many musical conventions (while establishing some of it's own, however), and above all it fucking bleeds the rudest, most hilarious attitude imaginable. While I can see that the rhythms here are perhaps designed to cater to whiteboys who are unwilling to get down (looking for electronic music that 'has balls' and an uncomplicated beat structure), I don't mind. Much dance music (and dance music culture) *is* exclusionary (I used to hate going to clubs as an eighteen year old for this reason) so I'm well pleased that there is stuff out there that I connect with easily. Fuck it, why can't I enjoy drunkenly dancing to disco with my friends and pounding my furniture to the Bloody Fist crew? I almost feel proud of the fact this stuff is the product of a regional Australian town, because it is world class, or at least a big middle digit to the rest of the world. This is what is going on in Australia today (well, one of the exciting things going on) – don't be threatened, it is a stack of fun.

V/A *Pirate Fuckin' Radio 100* CD [Hip Hop Slam]
Probably Hip-Hop compilation of the year, even though it's only April as I write this. Proceedings run the gamut, from guest appearances by legends (Chuck D, and more surprisingly, Jello Biafra!) to DJ mayhem utilising the most unexpected source material yet (*Nirvana?! Elastica?!*). A Bay Area SF focus is evident, meaning you get much action from Invisibl Skratch Piklz, Peanut Butter Wolf, Bullet Proof Scratch Hamsters et al, but musically this is the cultural epicenter right now, so it makes perfect sense. Its not like the rest of the world is neglected though; bits and pieces from all over crop up here and there. SO! My pledge to you: the best introduction to modern day Hip-Hop available.

V/A *Split Series 1-8* CD [Fat Cat]
I was initially sold on this thing after being played the Speedranch & Jansky Noise track sampling a big chunk of Dolomite for it's introduction. It's an unspeakably naughty track, plundering, mangling and ultimately destroying with great enthusiasm. The rest of the disc carries on this high standard, with precious little pretension. A weird strain of electronics is explored, somewhere between the directly glitch-ridden European stuff and more dance-oriented excursions of Warp and Rephlex. Distortion plays a role in most pieces, resulting in dirty bleeps and crunchy beats. More stuff that demands an airing through big subs in a Monaro (or whatever vehicle is currently popular with the youngsters).

V/A *Touch of the Infinite Vol.1* CDR [Church of the Infinite]
A descending Melbourne based compilation, starting off great and gradually heading downhill. The first four tracks by Kokoshkar are easily the most enjoyable proposition here, because they understand rock, and at least appear to have the interests of the listener in mind. Their contributions are also the most different, or 'out' to be found here, despite the noise stuff that pops up later on. Although exploring ideas many have tried before, Canine Harvest manage some interesting peaks during their Noise ('Noise' the genre) piece – there's a really pleasant moment at around 6:30 that makes everything else in its ten minute duration worthwhile. Same goes for the track that follows from 'Red Flecks vs. Meat Section' (?), but by this time I'm starting to think that there isn't much going on I haven't heard before. And so things go with Digital Rape (awful name), until the cheese-o-meter jumps off the scale with a bunch of electronic rhythms I don't really dig too much. I feel kind of bad admitting that I don't enjoy these tracks because I think it is really cool that people are pursuing stuff like this (as opposed to indie pop or whatever), but these people need to go further out – much further out. Who are you? What do you have to say? Are these the best means of communicating it?

John Zorn *Taboo and Exile* CD [Tzadik]
It seems my Zorn fixation is yet to wane. I don't get as academic about the man's work as some, I mean my interest in him stems from a love of Naked City, not his game pieces from the late 70s. Although I know that it was those ideas that would later inform the cut-up aesthetic, it is the pop-culture dissection I really like, and the material that followed his interest in Hardcore. *Taboo and Exile* fits pretty well into this side of Zorn's wide-ranging aesthetic, and despite involving players from Masada, this occupies different ground to the celebrated Jewish ensemble. Strings are key players in the pieces here, but they are tempered with pieces utilising everyone from Bill Laswell to Sim Cain (ex-Rollins Band!) to Fred Frith and Dave Lombardo (ex-Slayer, and an inspired inclusion). There is a common atmosphere present throughout the duration, but I think it may be more a result of the crystal clear production values rather than common ground in the music. Brief percussion pieces are followed by a minute of Naked City style scream-core, quickly chased by delicate string work and slow pounding torture (reminiscent of *Execution Ground* by Painkiller). There isn't the high speed of the Naked City discs but just as much pop cultural ground is air raided. Super dodgy cover artwork that attracts because of the wonderful typography, beautifully orchestrated colour and placement of shapes, while upsetting because of the imagery used – one image in particular in fact. It did force me to briefly consider my own sense of morality, though. I was surprised: some taboos exist for reasons I believe in. Breaking them in the pursuit of extremity or some such toss shares much with extreme sports and body piercing extreme culture idiots. All part of the same immense dunghill.

When in Melbourne, I recommend Synaesthesia (Lvl.1 rear of Maples Lane, Prahran, Victoria 3181) (PO Box 7252 Melbourne VIC 3004) (ph. 613 9529 5925) (www.synrecords.com). The vast majority of material reviewed here, plus the works of many of the artists featured in this issue, are available via this fine establishment. Some stuff also came from Missing Link (Flinders Lane City) who are great for Tzadik (and related) material, as well as quite a bit of good stuff from Forced Exposure in the US. Smoke Dreams on Flinders Street is all you need for Metal, including many wonderful T-Shirts, patches and stickers. I picked up a very swish beanie with a big red pentagram on it just the other day. When in Adelaide, The Record Room on Twin Street City is a relatively new shop specialising in an interesting cross section of new music: I guess electronic music is the common thread, so you get MoWax and Ninja Tune type stuff in with Mego and Mille Plateaux. There is also a new Hip-Hop specialty shop that has opened up in Gays Arcade City, the name of which escapes me right now (damn!) but it is worth seeking out as the staff seem pretty enthusiastic about getting the good shit out there (as opposed to the likes of Central Station). Pneumatic in the Renaissance Arcade seems to be moving along nicely, and is the place to go for Metal in Adelaide; avoid Verandah like the plague, 'cos the Pneumatic kids are genuine bogans and therefore know their shit. I've heard about a couple of other shops too (apparently B# Sharp has had a few interesting items in stock of late) but I'll leave it at that for now. What happened to the 'zine rack in Big Star? It seemed to have disappeared when I was in there a few weeks back. The jury is out on those folk for the time being I think, as there were like ten copies of Ujaku6 still in there! Sydney is still a bit of a mystery to me, as the only shops I know of are Redeye and Silver Rocket. Redeye is a great place to visit, as Oren has put together a pretty great avant garde/experimental section that I would suspect is *the* source for interesting music in the city. Silver Rocket only agreed to take copies of Ujaku when it was free, so I guess I can't count on them anymore. Brisbane and elsewhere? Please get in touch, I know precious little about your regions.
While I remember, look out for www.ujaku.com sometime this year. I'm sure that domain name cannot be taken!

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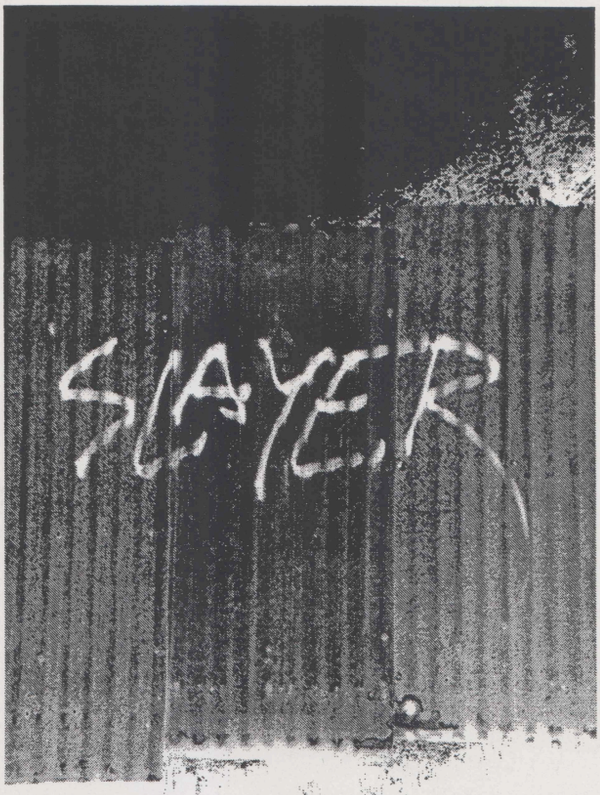

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ZZ TOP - Adel. Ent. Centre, some date in April (you work it out, Grover)

Several points about the above, then, in that we had a situation where the audience was possibly more thrilling than ZZ Top themselves, which is not to say that the Top didn't rock, because they did, in excelsis, my friends, particularly with a pre-encore trifecta of "Gimme All Your Lovin'" (which, admittedly, lacked passion), "Sharp Dressed Man", and "Legs", with those large white phallic extension guitars, which spin, although they were spun only once, and I missed it. I also missed the beards walking on a conveyor belt in front of their speakers during a solo, although Karl M. assures me it was a moment of the sublime, what can I say, I felt similarly 'sublime' after a toilet pit-stop (that nights' curry, yes!). I did, however, catch several extremely horrid moments of blues traveller wandering, which made me want to leave. And, of course, "36-22-36", which, as I've said to friends, roughly runs out thus: "average age of audience-my age-average age of audience". Speaking of which, our favourite audience members near where we were sitting (up high, to the right), was the fat guy who only cheered when they played "Legs" (maybe he went to gay discos in the '80's, or maybe he was cheering at the light show bummed from the Village People), the burly, muscly, bald weird guy who clapped in perfect rhythm but did not yell in perfect pitch, and went wild for the encore, and the bogan chick sat next to us, who called her friend Jeff from her mobile phone mid-performance and held said phone into the air, I dunno why, so Jeff could "catch the vibes". (I actually think Jeff was in the audience, just sitting somewhere else, and they were doing a time-zone thing.) She also raised her leg during "Legs" (challenge, I know), and would occasionally step-up, and gyrate like a woman having a strange fit, for approximately 30 seconds (I timed it!), and then sit down. My favourite moment was walking into the Entertainment Centre for a ZZ Top show, only to look up at the TV screens and see the video for that Destiny's Child song "Say My Name", which is my favourite single of the year, and got me secretly hoping that they'd tour soon, so I could come to the Entertainment Centre again. I also very much liked the merchandise display, and Karl M.'s obvious awe at the range of product offered, though he didn't slap down some money for some sunglasses, presumably because he already had a pair.

The fuckers didn't do "Sleeping Bag", though.

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